THE MAMLUK CITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape

Nimrod Luz

Cambridge

The Mamluk City in the Middle East

The Mamluk City in the Middle East offers an interdisciplinary study of urban history, urban experience, and the nature of urbanism in the region under the rule of the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517). The book focuses on three less-explored but politically significant cities in the Syrian region – Jerusalem, Safad (now in Israel), and Tripoli (now in Lebanon) – and presents a new approach and methodology for understanding historical cities. Drawing on diverse textual sources and intensive field surveys, Nimrod Luz adroitly reveals the character of the Mamluk city as well as various aspects of urbanism in the region, establishing the premodern city of the Middle East as a valid and useful lens through which to study various themes such as architecture, art history, history, and politics of the built environment. As part of this approach, Luz considers the processes by which Mamluk discourses of urbanism were conceptualized and then inscribed in the urban environment as concrete expressions of architectural design, spatial planning, and public memorialization.

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History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape

NIMROD LUZ
The Western Galilee College

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This is to Ofri and Ido

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Preface

Every book is a voyage! And this has been a particularly long one. But now it has finally ended. I could not have done it without guides, companions, and fellow travelers, all of whom I was so very fortunate to encounter en route. Their constant support and help when needed have enabled me to conclude this endeavor.

First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to my language editor Mr. Avi Aronsky, who graciously and professionally waved his magic wand on this otherwise very humble manuscript. Surely, the oft-repeated but ever-valid warning applies: I alone am responsible for the shortcomings of this book.

This book would have never seen the light of day without the constant encouragement (truthfully, there were times when harder measures were needed) of two formidable ladies who, together and throughout my entire academic career, have been the most truthful and caring friends and supporters not just for my research but indeed for my well-being. I feel privileged to acknowledge their efforts and energies taken on my part: Prof. Michal Biran and Dr. Nurit Stadler, indeed my most trustworthy of *kushdāshiyūn*.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to former teachers and now friends and colleagues who set me out on the fascinating road of exploring the geography of the Middle East and Islamic civilization: Prof. Buni Rubin, Prof. Yehushua Ben Arie, and Prof. Ronnie Ellenblum in the Department of Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Prof. Reuven Amitai, Prof. Amikam Elad, Prof. Yohanan Friedman, Prof Rachel Milstein, and Prof. Ella Landua-Tassarun from The Institute of Asian and African Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Their exemplary scholarship, meticulous guidance, and constant support went far beyond the "call of duty" and remain a gift I cherish with all my heart. I am also grateful to Ms. Tamar Sofer and Ms. Michal Kidron of the Cartographic Laboratory of the Hebrew University

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Throughout the various stages of this study, I enjoyed numerous intellectual encounters and professional conversations with scholars worldwide. I remember fondly my talks with Prof. Yi Fu Tuan, Prof. Bob Sack, and Prof. Jamie Peck at UW-Madison. My ongoing conversations with Prof. Don Mitchell of Syracuse University were always very beneficial, to me at least. I enjoyed the hospitality of Prof. Dominique Chevalier at the Sorbonne and, in particular, the concept of "space sociale." The late Prof. Andre Raymond was always supportive and kind – I hope this book gives him due respect and acknowledges his enormous contribution to the field of Middle Eastern urbanism.

The last leg of this book was written while I was a research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Philosophy in Berlin. I wish to thank Prof. Dagmar Schaefer and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for their support. It is also with great pleasure that I thank the Western Galilee College Research Authority for its financial support. Kudos are also due to my colleagues in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Western Galilee College for their friendship and for their constant struggle, at times against all odds, to maintain a lively research agenda.

My most important words of acknowledgment are due to my family. To my father who should have been the first reader of this manuscript. To my mother. To Nitsan, for sustaining me and for always reminding me that there are things of greater importance outside the groves of academia. To Ofri and Ido for putting things in perspective and for asking from time to time, "Daddy, are you done with the book?" To that I say:

Done at last, done at last!

N. L.

Abbreviations

AAS	*Asian and African Studies*
BEO	*Bulletin d'Etude Orientale*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CIA	Van Berchem, M. *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*. Le Caire, 1922–1923. 3 vols.
EI[1]	*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st edition. Leiden and London, 1913–1936
EI[2]	*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. Leiden and London, 1954–2005
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of African and Oriental Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
MSR	*Mamluk Studies Review*
PEFQS	*Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Studies*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PPTS	*Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*
RCEA	Combe, É. et al. Eds. *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*. Le Caire, 1931–1991. 18 vols.
SI	*Studia Islamica*

PART A

INTRODUCTION

> Cities are dwelling places that nations use when they have reached the desired goal of luxury and of the things that go with it.
>
> – Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*

> The city, as one finds in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community.
>
> – Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*

THE UNDERLYING ARGUMENT OF THIS BOOK

The Mamluk City in the Middle East is a historical, cultural, and geographic study of Syria, *Bilād al-Shām*, during the Mamluk period (1260–1517). This work constitutes both a reading and rendition of the urban history, urban experience, and nature of urbanism in this region under the Mamluk Sultanate. More specifically, this analysis "visits" the less-known provincial Mamluk cities in the region, with an emphasis on Jerusalem, Safad, and Tripoli. By concentrating on the cultural urban landscape and scrutinizing its built environment, I offer a new approach and methodology for reading historical cities.

Throughout the pages of this study, the Mamluk city is portrayed through three lenses: the tangible, the socially constructed, and the conceptualized. By dint of a comparison of mostly provincial cities of *al-Shām*, as well as insights from other cities, I establish the very existence of the Mamluk city and demonstrate that there was indeed a sense of Mamluk urbanism. Furthermore, the book addresses the conceptual model of "the

Islamic city." I contend that the urban expanses of *Bilād al-Shām*, like the cities of any other region, are the outcome and processes of multiple forces that have conjointly and perpetually shaped them. By exploring these cities in their historico-cultural context and by engaging overarching urban theories, I hope to emancipate Mamluk, Islamic, and Middle Eastern cities from generalizations past and demonstrate that they are indeed full-fledged cities.

The creation and consolidation of the Mamluk Sultanate, followed by the final blow to the Crusader kingdom and the expulsion of the Mongols, contributed directly to Syria's transformation into a coherent political and administrative unit.[1] For almost 270 years, the area (*al-Shām*) was under the aegis of the Cairo-centerd Mamluk bureaucracy and the imperial army.[2] The Mamluk sultanate was thus *al-Shām*'s longest successive period in which the entire region shared the same political history since the Islamic conquest of the seventh century AD. This run of stability enables us to conduct a research study on the nature of cities (i.e., their urban features, institutions, urban policies) within the same geographical region during a distinct historical epoch. Notwithstanding Ira Lapidus's seminal works in the late 1960s on economic, social, and political life in cities under the control of the Mamluk sultanate and the significant rise in works on the sultanate's history, architecture, and art over the past few decades, scholars have yet to research in a comprehensive manner urbanism and the urban history of *al-Shām* during the Mamluk period.

From the dawn of civilization, the city has always been the place in which societies and cultures reach their peak. The crux of Ibn Khaldun's urban theory is that the city is a superior cultural phenomenon, one that represents the most sophisticated level that any culture can achieve. Likewise, Park notes that "with all their complexities and artificialities," cities are "man's most imposing creation, the most prodigious of human artefacts."[3]

[1] In her analysis of the Aleppan scholar 'Izz al-Dīn ibn Shaddād's *A'lāq al-Khaṭīra,* Antrim suggests that it is only during the Mamluk period that one can uphold Syria as a fully fledged region. See, Z. Antrim, "Making Syria Mamluk: Ibn Shaddād's A'lāq al-Khaṭīrah," *MSR* 11/1 (2007): 1–18.

[2] In his invariably persuasive manner Ayalon writes: "The history of the Mamluk military aristocracy was, therefore, first and foremost, the history of the aristocracy within the narrow confinement of Cairo." D. Ayalon, "The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 (1968): 320.

[3] R. E. Park, "The City and Civilization," in E. C. Hughes et al. (eds.), *Human Communities: The City and the Human Ecology* (New York, 1976), 6.

Following in the footsteps of Ibn Khaldun, Lewis Mumford,[4] and others, I deem the city to be a vibrant, ever-changing cultural entity. This understanding enables us to view the city as a "work in progress," rather than a fixed and inert unit. The urban stage has invariably been where socioreligious norms and imperatives, political structures, and ideals are inscribed onto the landscape and transformed into a concrete built environment. The city landscape – the built environment writ large – is a repository of unflagging human enterprise that is shaped by various cultural perspectives, be they harmonious or at odds with each other. The city, as well as the urban form, never rests and is never complete.[5] What is more, the city constitutes both a text and context for scrutinizing urban history and the concepts of urbanism.

Given the scarcity of pertinent sources on its urban topography, the existing landscapes are especially crucial to the research on the provincial Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*.[6] In addition to the traditional texts, reading the city in its cultural context[7] entails "mandatory sources," such as archaeological-cum-architectural sites such as the city landscape, monuments, institutions, and private houses, and the perceptions of the city's manifold "users," both past and present.

The city is the product of multifarious cultural understandings. In other words, its elaborate landscape bears the imprint of multiple cultures. Accordingly, I have chosen to use the plural form of culture for several reasons: to stress the various ideologies and perceptions that coexist in any city; to signify the continuous struggle between different players over which ideas, ideologies, and urban conceptions will define the city; to highlight the heterogeneity of cities; and to emphasize the fact that the city is a socially constructed space. My examination of Mamluk cities is premised on a theoretical awareness of the ways in which disparate factors (social, cultural, and political forces; citizens; past urban developments; contemporary readers of chronicles; and travelers) have built and shaped the city. Moreover, this study draws heavily on several modern fields of

[4] See L. Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York, 1938).

[5] S. Kostof, *The City Shaped. Urban Patterns and Meaning through History* (Boston, London, Toronto, 1991), 9.

[6] R. S. Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton NJ, 1991), 248.

[7] The geographers J. Agnew, J. Mercer, and D. Sopher were the first to elaborate on this idea as part of their effort to restore a more humanized and less quantified approach to geography; idem (eds.), *The City in Cultural Context* (Boston, London, Sydney, 1984). For a similar approach, also see D. Chevallier et al., *L'Espace social de la ville arabe* (Paris, 1979).

research: historical, cultural, and urban geography; the history of the Middle East; Islamic art history and architecture; archaeology; and cultural studies. At the crossroads of all these disciplines lies the study of historic cultural landscapes. In my estimation, the research of the city must encompass the historical production of urban space; namely, human patterns that alter the contours of the natural environment.

This book thus constitutes an attempt to view the cities of the historical Middle East through the medium of the urban landscape. By casting the city as my primary research object, I hope to overcome some of the barriers and lacunae that inform the field of urban history in all that concerns pre-sixteenth-century Middle Eastern cities. Another problematic aspect of urban studies of the Middle East and the Islamic world in general is the continuing efforts to construct a theory of the city or urbanism that is endemic to Islam, namely "the Islamic city."

That said, contemporary urban scholars of the Middle East are attempting to debunk the notion of "the Islamic city." For instance, Janet Abu Lughod's influential paper suggests that few urban attributes span the entire Muslim world.[8] My overarching claim is that to extricate the field of urban studies from the theoretical bias and misconceptions that marred early research on the lands of Islam, we need to view the Mamluk city, inter alia, from a broader theoretical standpoint. More specifically, cities need to be studied on a regional and historical scale that dovetails smoothly with general theories of the city and urbanism the world over. Or, as green activists put it, scholars must "think globally" and "act locally." Alternating between different geographical scales – local, regional, global – promises to liberate the field from the efforts to construct a theory of Islamic urbanism.[9] Throughout this book, I contend that scholars can improve their access to and attain a better understanding of cities and their societies if they are included within the wide-ranging trends and theoretical debates that pertain to historical and contemporary urban studies because the focus on the role of Islam in urbanism or the urbanism of Islam have, by and large, yielded notions of across-the-board unity that never existed in the Muslim world.

[8] J. Abu Lughod, "The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 19 (1987): 155–176.

[9] This idea was already put forward by Anthony King, "Culture, Space, and Representation: Problems of Methodology in Urban Studies (revised edition)," in *Urbanism in Islam. The Proceedings of the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam (ICUIT)*, Supplement (Tokyo, 1989), 368.

In sum, the present book offers a critical reading of built urban environments that undertakes to analyze the history of cities, rather than the histories that took place in cities. Consequently, the urban sphere constitutes the focus of this work and is not a mere backdrop.[10]

STUDYING THE CITY IN CULTURAL CONTEXT: CONTEXTUALIZING CULTURE AND LANDSCAPE

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the overwhelmingly dominant outlook in the field of urban studies was the quantitative (and technical) approach whereby cities operate solely on the basis of rational economic incentives of profit and loss, both on the individual and group level. In response to this growing trend, Agnew, Mercer, and Sopher suggest that the city should be examined "in cultural context":

> The study of the city in cultural context implies two things. First, network of practices and ideas exist that are drawn from the shared experiences and histories of social groups. Secondly, these practices and ideas can be invoked to account for specific patterns of urban growth and urban form.[11]

Put differently, the city should be understood and explored as a cultural product and process. This sort of study may be conducted via the urban form – the city's built environment. In contrast to the quantitative and allegedly rationalistic approach to urban studies, Agnew, Mercer, and Sopher insist that culture counts! In so doing, they assume that culture has measurable, or at least visible, effects on the landscape. With this in mind, let us attempt to define culture.

The concept of culture is notoriously difficult to pin down.[12] Indeed, the scholarly discourse on this rather commonplace term bears witness to the problems that both using and attempting to define it entail. Needless to say, the concept abounds in various academic fields (e.g., anthropology, sociology, economy, history, and the arts),[13] the media and, not least, everyday life. Nevertheless, one would be hard pressed to find a straightforward or consensual definition for this quotidian concept.

[10] This idea was inspired by Summerson's insightful definition of urban history as "the history of the fabrics of cities"; see, J. Summerson, "Urban Forms," in O. Handlin and J. Burchard (eds.), *The Historian and the City* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1963), 165.
[11] Agnew, Mercer, and Sopher, *The City in Cultural Context*, 1.
[12] Z. Bauman, *Culture as Praxis* (London, 1973).
[13] For example, see the discussion on the connections between economy and culture in R. J. Holton, *Economy and Society* (London, New York, 1992).

The Latin term *culture* has several meanings: cultivation,[14] study, education, and even liturgy.[15] Over the years, culture came to be understood as the sum total of the social behaviors, norms, and institutions that characterize a social group. Within this context, culture was perceived as a *genre de vie*, especially by anthropologists exploring tribal groups around the world. The definition here was formulated by Edward B. Tylor, one of the founding fathers of anthropology:

> Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.[16]

Despite being coined in 1871, Tylor's definition is still in vogue among anthropologists. It is not appreciably different from a more recent definition that appeared in a distinguished journal:

> Culture is the values, belief, behaviour, and material objects that, together, form a people's way of life. Culture includes what we think, how we act, and what we own. Culture is both a bridge to our past and a guide to the future.[17]

According to this school of thought, a group's culture is the sum total of mutual understandings that are acquired through acculturation (education, informal ties, etc.).

At one and the same time, culture is also a human mechanism that enables groups to function in different, occasionally hostile, environments. In addition, it serves as the basis for a shared social life.[18] Following this same logic, Braudel argues that culture naturally consists of a moral-cum-spiritual dimension, on the one hand, and a materialistic, even trivial dimension, on the other.[19] Since the mundane aspect is manifest in the built environment, the urban landscape must also be understood as a product of the culture in which it was forged.

In light of these definitions, we may conclude that the sharing of cultural traits engenders a close enough view of the world for designing a residential space in concert. Put differently, people transform and create an

[14] The word indeed turns up in the context of agriculture.
[15] E. Kahler, "Culture and Evolution," in M.F. Ashley Montagu (ed.), *Culture: Man's Adaptive Dimension* (New York, 1968), 3–4.
[16] E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Research into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* (New York, [1871] 1974), 1.
[17] W. Soyinka, "Africa's Culture Producers," *Society* 28/2 (January-February 1991), 32.
[18] M.J. Swartz and D.K. Jordan (eds.), *Culture – the Anthropological Perspective* (New York, 1980).
[19] F. Braudel, *A History of Civilization* (tr. R. Mayne) (London, 1994), 3–8.

expanse – a landscape – by implementing a set of norms, ideas, and laws that derive from a particular culture. Culture thus impacts human activity not only by defining noble ideals, but also by serving as a mechanism that shapes and regulates an array of habits, capacities, and styles from which people choose what they believe to be the most appropriate techniques, construction methods, and aesthetic values for their environment. This is precisely what anthropologist Ann Swidler is referring to when she equates culture with a handy toolkit.[20]

Thus far, I have sought to establish what culture is and how it affects the landscape. That said, the countless definitions offered by scholars from manifold disciplines attest to the difficulty of articulating the exact nature of culture, as it simultaneously refers to both an ideology (and its attendant social codes) that influences the cultural process and the products of that same culture (writing, music, architecture, rituals, ceremonies, language, etc.). So, in a sense, culture is omniscient because it is the reason, the process, and the outcome all in one. Because of this definition's ample elasticity and expansiveness, instead of clarifying matters, it obfuscates and distances the concept of culture to the point of futility.

The tendency to reify culture is the primary reason behind the problematic, certainly inconsistent and insufficient definitions of this key concept. In recognition of this theoretical lacuna, cultural geographers have sought to devise various alternatives. For example, Don Mitchell avers that "there's no such thing as culture."[21] He demonstrates that whenever culture is perceived as an ontological entity, object, or sphere, its definition tends to be fuzzy and redundant. In his estimation, culture is an idea rooted in particular systems of reproduction: architecture, music, art, education, etc.[22] Following theorists like Antonio Grmasci and Bruno Latour, Mitchell contends that, so long as we keep searching for the ontological roots of culture, we will be less inclined to raise other, more important culture-related issues, such as: who defines culture? How does it affect our lives? What are the power structures that undergird the idea of culture? Who are the social agents that promote and ultimately benefit from certain perceptions of culture? Put differently, Mitchell places an emphasis on

[20] A. Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociology Review* 51 (April 1986): 273–286.

[21] Mitchell, "There's No Such Thing as Culture," 102–116. Also see idem, *Cultural Geography – A Critical Introduction* (Oxford, Malden MA, 2000).

[22] Ibid., 110.

what is often referred to as "the cultural industry."[23] His position also infers that culture, or what is perceived as culture, is the result of relationships and power struggles between players in society. These relationships are often so entrenched in the social fabric that they are no longer questioned and are assumed to be natural, rather than socially constructed norms, perceptions, and ideals. In consequence, culture should be understood, first and foremost, as a framework for concealing the power structure and struggles that are responsible for the fact that a particular social code or moral behavior is deemed to fall under the rubric of culture. Put succinctly, we need to rid ourselves of what Gupta and Ferguson called "the fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces."[24]

Culture is an ever-changing concept. Therefore, it is but a temporary representation of a given society's norms and ideals. Once the conflicts and struggles over these norms have been settled, they are considered the cultural pillars of that society. However, these norms are constantly in flux or under pressure to be altered. In consequence, the spatial outcomes of these ideals are also inherently transient because they are the ramifications of the social and political changes within any society.

According to this perspective, the study of the city in a cultural context need not be understood as researching culture through the mediation of the city, but rather a theoretical awareness of the dynamic quality of culture and, above all, its political implications. Therefore, it is imperative to realize that the very classification or omission of a phenomenon under the heading of culture constitutes a political act, which is usually the sole prerogative of those in power. For example, the Romans deemed outsiders to be acultural (barbaric), whereas Mamluk dignitaries shaped the urban milieu as they saw fit, in accordance with their political needs, religious norms, and aesthetic tastes. By grasping culture as an idea, rather than an entity, the study of cities may well avoid the fixation for arriving at a clear-cut, complete, and overly rigorous definition of what constitutes a city in the Islamic world. Moreover, we are less likely to view the city as frozen in time. Instead, it offers the possibility of dynamic means for examining cities of yesteryear and their societies and appreciating that they were and remain vibrant entities in a constant state of flux.

[23] The concept of "cultural industry" is the hallmark of the Frankfurt School; for example, see T. W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London, New York, 2001).

[24] A. Gupta, J. Ferguson, "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7/1(1992): 6–23.

That said, to study the city in cultural context may well be an inspiring idea, but it is simply too vague, and the reader might infer or aspire to topics that are not part of the present scope of the book. Culture is an abstraction too big to work with methodologically. Using culture as a blanket term may suggest a hoard of issues and subject matters to be explored. Surely, the specificities of urban administration, the role of women in cities, philanthropy, the city and the legal system, family networks, education, the economic structure of the city and professional guilds, urban demography, and many more topics are all important and may well be addressed in their cultural context within cities. Therefore, it seems essential at this juncture to address more directly the way that I navigate between the above understanding of culture and the exploration into Syrian cities during the Mamluk period. The mediating term and context for the study of cities is by and large, *landscape*. This term is used by various disciplines, but, in what follows, I will contextualize it from a historical and cultural geographical point of view.

Landscape is surely one of the more vexing and therefore fascinating human creations. It is anything but self-explanatory, simple, or innocent. Certainly, it is not a neutral arena in which social relations matter of factly or accidently unfold. Landscape, as the argument goes, is not simply out there to be studied as a natural phenomenon. It is certainly not "nature."[25] In this context, landscape is "culture" before it is "nature."[26] The very word "landscape" in its cultural meaning entails the existence and work of human agents.[27] Hence, landscapes simply do not exist without human agents. Landscape is society's unwitting biography in which and through which ideas, codes of practice, religious norms, and cultural standards take physical form. Therefore, landscape consists of physical phenomena but is not confined to the physical manifestations of objects. This is, perhaps, the most comprehensive medium through which societies and individuals have expressed their uniqueness, aspirations, and status, among many other sociopolitical needs. Therefore, landscape is essentially a cultural praxis; it is the outcome of a society's ideals, images, and, at times, code of practice in a given time and particular geography. As such, cultural landscape is a

[25] Y. Tuan, "Thought and Landscape," in D. Meinig (ed.), *Interpretations of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographic Essays* (New York, 1979), 89–102.
[26] S. Simon, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, 1995), 5.
[27] K. Olwig, "Sexual Cosmology: Nation and Landscape at the Conceptual Interstices of Nature and Culture, or: What does Landscape Really Mean?" B. Bender (ed.), *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford, 1993), 307–308.

highly politicized construction, sphere, or process.[28] And (to state the obvious) it is certainly the product of human labor!

However, if this is indeed the case, then Mitchell is right to suggest that it is also about the work that landscape does; namely, to mystify human labor and make it (i.e., the landscape itself) appear natural, rather than the product of social-cultural-political forces.[29] It should be seen as a cultural medium that has a dual role: "It naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable."[30] Hence, landscape is a beguiling phenomenon: although manmade and perceived as a natural outcome of human labor, it is anything but natural. The formation of landscape is inexorably linked to politics, power structures, and surely struggles over meanings and ownership. The creation or rather the construction of landscape is all about power and thus entails disputes and the use of force. Therefore, the construction of landscape is a continuous dialogue and, indeed, struggle between different forces. Along the way, power is used, implemented, and contested because there are no power relations without resistance.[31]

The use of power in the construction of landscape is unavoidably linked with ideology or, put simply, the way people want to represent themselves.[32] Landscapes are ideological also because they can be used to endorse, legitimize, and/or challenge social and political control.[33] Thus, landscapes carry signs and symbols that represent social norms, identity, memory, cultural codes, and the ways these were, and still are, fought and debated among different forces. It is indeed a text and hence susceptible as any other to many readings.[34] Landscape is one of the most complex and intriguing signifying systems, saturated with signs, symbols, and

[28] See for example, D. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London, 1984). J. Duncan, *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1990).

[29] Mitchell, *Cultural Geography*, 104.

[30] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London, 1994), 15.

[31] M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (ed. C. Gordon) (London, 1980).

[32] H. Baker and G. Bigger (eds.), *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1992), 1–12.

[33] L. Kong, "Ideological Hegemony and the Political Symbolism of Religious Buildings in Singapore," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11 (1993): 25.

[34] The literature is abundant on this issue. See for example, D. Meinig (ed.), *Interpretations of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographic Essays* (New York, 1979); Duncan, *City as Text*; T. Barnes and J. Duncan, "Introduction: Writing Worlds" in T. Barnes and J. Duncan (eds.), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the representation of Landscape* (London, 1992), 1–17.

meanings.[35] Inevitably, as a signifying system, it must be regarded and read as a text and therefore susceptible to all the dialectic and hermeneutic processes that are related to text analysis.

So, who gets to "author" the landscape? Who has the power of authority to write the landscape? Furthermore, and more pertinent to the current book, what are the meanings assigned and the symbolization and cultural codes that may be read and inferred through the built environment of Mamluk cities? The landscape as text metaphor is a very useful idea, but, at the same time, it leaves us with a conundrum: a metaphor for what? In what ways are those icons, symbols, images, artifacts, institutions being used as ideological/political/personal signs and signifiers and which needs and politics of those communities/individuals were met through them? Following the understanding that landscapes are texts and may be read as texts, I will offer a "reading" of the built environment of cities during the Mamluk era. The specificities of those readings vary greatly from looking at the forms of houses, the role of neighborhoods, the meaning of the citadel, or the limitation of the public sphere.

Thus far, I have contextualized culture and landscape to further explain the way cities are analyzed throughout this book. However, it also behooves scholars to rethink the Islamic component embedded in the very definition of "Islamic cities" – a conceptualization that prevailed in the field from its inception. Islam should also be defined in a more flexible and contextualized manner. The Muslim faith is a civilization and religious worldview that spans vast continents, more than fourteen hundred years, and an intricate nexus of historical events. Therefore, pinning down this concept to a single general definition, a set of rigid social behaviors, or an immutable set of laws that ignore the particularities of epoch or region is bound to produce erroneous results. As with culture, the following question begs asking: who rendered a particular definition of Islam and for what reason? In grappling with this matter, I will begin by saying that, as the field matures, scholars are becoming more cognizant of the multivocality, idiosyncrasies, and nuances of what was originally labeled as "Islam." For example, Lapidus is clearly aware of some of the shortcomings of a monolithic approach to this term. Early on in his book, he states that one of his main assumptions is that Middle Eastern Islamic society was predicated on the synthesis of preexisting institutions with an Islamic cultural style and identity. In turn, these bodies interacted with the

[35] J. Duncan and N. Duncan, "Re(reading) the Landscape," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6 (1998): 117–126.

institutions and cultures of other regions of the world to create a number of variant Islamic societies.[36]

That which is obscured or merely implied in Lapidus's contextual approach is rather explicit in Dale Eickelman's anthropological analysis of an Islamic community in Morocco. As an observer of contemporary Islamic societies, Eickelman is concerned with how aspects of a particular culture and society change over time. To this end, he focuses on a single pilgrimage center in modern-day Boujad, a town in western Morocco. Following in Weber's footsteps, he argues that it is impossible to construe ideas and beliefs as ahistorical Platonic entities.[37] Simply put, ideas or systems of belief are not inert, final, or fixed terms but are in a state of constant flux. If this astute observation applies to a lone pilgrimage site in the modern era, then it should also hold true for an entire civilization of the magnitude and richness of Islam.

Clifford Geertz's comparative anthropological survey of societies in Morocco and Indonesia also constitutes a study of Islamic societies in general. In this work, Geertz demonstrates the importance of availing oneself of multiple viewpoints and multidisciplinary approaches.[38] Moreover, he illuminates the disparate elements, religiocultural ideologies and social developments that coexist within "Islam," especially on the margins of the Muslim world. By comparing manifestations of the same faith in two strikingly different "Islamic" societies, Geertz gains insight as to how religions respond/adapt to social change. In developing his arguments, he looks at the religious history of both countries, focusing on the reigns of two prominent leaders: King Muhammad V of Morocco and Sukarno (the first president of Indonesia). According to Geertz, the religious views, religiosity, and historical experience of each society are exceedingly different, even though all these elements in both societies emanate from the same source – Islam, in its capacity as an umbrella term.

This same recognition of change and heterogeneity must also be applied to the concept of the Islamic city – one of the most popular, observed, and researched cultural artefacts in the Muslim world. Over the next few pages, I will trace the historical development of the "Islamic city" and outline some recent critiques of scholarly definitions that were given to this influential concept.

[36] I. M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (New York, 1988), xxii.
[37] D. F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam. Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin and London, 1976), 3.
[38] C. Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago, 1971).

THE MODEL OF THE ISLAMIC CITY

The foundations for the theoretical model of "the Islamic city" were laid down by Max Weber.[39] In his seminal work on the city, Weber focused primarily on Europe but also explained why Oriental (as opposed to Occidental) cities usually failed to make the cut:

> An urban community in the full meaning of the word appears as a general phenomenon only in the Occident. Exceptions occasionally were to be found in the Near East but only occasionally and in rudiments. To constitute a full urban community a settlement must display a relative predominance of trade-commercial relations with the settlement as a whole displaying the following features: 1. a fortification; 2. a market; 3. a court of its own and at least partially autonomous law; 4. a related form of association; and 5. at least partial autonomy and autocephaly.[40]

As opposed to the Western city, Weber deemed its Eastern counterpart to be inferior and bereft of any of the fundamental attributes of a "proper" city.[41] In so doing, Weber basically dismissed thousands of years of urbanization and cities outside the European continent simply because they do not conform to his paradigm of the "urban community." The audacity and Eurocentricity of this statement is all the more blatant when one considers that most cities in Europe did not contain all these ingredients at various times and for lengthy periods.[42] Unfortunately, the vast majority of urban studies that were conducted on the Middle East and the Muslim world during the fledgling stages of this discipline were under the sway of Weber's bold yet unsubstantiated generalizations.

The studies on post-seventh-century Middle Eastern cities and urbanism were inaugurated by French scholars in North Africa and Syria, areas that were either under the direct control of France or were its protectorates. Abu Lughod was the first scholar to notice that these early works reflected

[39] E. Eldem, D. Goffman, and B. Masters scrutinize this point in idem, *The Ottoman City between East and West. Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge, 1999), 1–16.

[40] M. Weber, *The City* (tr. D. Martindale and G. Neuwirth) (London, New York, 1958), 80–81.

[41] Weber expresses the same views in other publications, such as M. Weber, *Economics and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (eds. G. Roth and C. Witich) (tr. E. Fischoff) (New York, 1968), 1227–1334.

[42] Surely, Weber was well aware of that, but coming from a sociological perspective he wanted to emphasize the social structure and processes that led to the modern city and the rise of the West. For a critique about these shortcoming in Weber's theory see, S. N Eisenstadt, "Weber's Analysis of Islam and the Specific Pattern of Islamic Civilization," in T. E. Huff and W. Scluchter (eds.), *Max Weber and Islam* (New Brunswick and London, 1999), 281–294.

two main *isnāds* (a tradition's chain of transmitters): a North African and Syrian school.[43] In North Africa, pioneering studies were carried out by the Marçais brothers.[44] Their underlying assumption was that Islam is an urban religion and that a practicing Muslim thus requires a city environment in order to fully adhere to *sharʿi* law. To meet these religious obligations, the Marçais brothers claimed that Muslim communities established similar social institutions and physical layouts in most "Islamic cities." This hypothesis bolstered the argument whereby the entire region shared an analogous morphology and that all its urban landscapes were homogenous. On the Syrian front, it was Jean Sauvaget who contributed a series of groundbreaking studies. Working in an area that still contained an abundance of Greco-Roman remnants, Sauvaget underscored the differences between the "organized" and "ordered" Roman cities, on the one the hand, and the chaotic urban layout and general scarcity of urban institutions that informed Islamic cities, on the other. For example, Sauvaget declared that Damascus, which he studied at length, is not really a city. Instead, he claimed that it was, by and large, a place where a plethora of individuals operate for the sole purpose of advancing their private interests.[45] In addition, Sauvaget claimed that Islamic jurists never considered cities to be legal entities, thereby indicating that the Muslim world placed little significance on the urban realm.

The tension between the perception of Islam as an urban religion and the absence of Islamic laws that deal specifically with the city appears irreconcilable. In his study on the Muslim world, French geographer De Planhol also made note of the lack of juridical interest in cities. However, unlike his predecessors, De Planhol alluded to the vitality of the Islamic city and its importance to Islam,[46] but he, too, did not address this inconsistency.

Notwithstanding these studies, the field's conceptual model of the Islamic city was predicated on a meagre selection of empirical studies. Moreover, the fact that the findings from North Africa were not corroborated by those from Syria did not deter scholars from advancing this

[43] Abu Lughod, "The Islamic City," 157.

[44] See, for example, W. Marçais, "L'Islamisme et la vie urbaine," *L'Académie de Inscription et Belles-Lêtters, Comptes Rendus* (Paris, 1928): 86–100; and G. Marçais, "La conception des villes dans l'Islam," *Revue d'Alger* 2 (1945): 517–533.

[45] J. Sauvaget, "Esquisse d'une hitsoire de la ville de Damas," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 8 (1934): 455–456.

[46] X. De Planhol, *World of Islam* (Ithaca, 1959), 11–12.

paradigm. In other words, the research community hastily jumped to conclusions.

The culmination of this paradigm was undoubtedly Gustav Von Grunebaum's 1955 tour de force "The Structure of the Islamic City,"[47] in which the seasoned scholar amalgamated prevalent findings on the region's cities into a coherent theoretical model. For better or worse, Von Grunebaum crafted a theory of urbanism that purports to cover the entire Muslim world. According to his model, the Islamic city falls short of its Greco-Roman forerunner because it is bereft of all municipal organization and an aesthetic feel for the public sphere. Von Grunebaum portrayed "the Islamic city: as a concentric hierarchy of commercial zones revolving around a mosque at the city's center. From a social standpoint, the Islamic city's private residential areas and public spaces were highly segregated. Von Grunebaum believed that, in contrast to European urbanites, the residents of the Islamic city lacked a sense of solidarity. As a result, the neighborhood, or *quarter* as it is often called, tends to be the focal point of urban life. Von Grunebaum's exceedingly negative description of the Islamic city was "marketed" in an extremely concise and efficient package because his model features a straightforward morphological map of the city along with a general account of its deficient social institutions. On account of its elegant simplicity, Von Grunebaum's model was widely accepted by scholars (from both within and outside the field).

By the early 1960s, scholars had coalesced an ahistoric and ageographic model of Islamic urbanism. More specifically, they contended that a rather homogenous Islamic culture and attendant civilizations had spawned a rigid urban model that was embraced with little variation throughout the vast regions of the Muslim world. The underlying assumption of this theory is that neither the geographical particularities nor the vicissitudes of time stood in the way of the ascendant uniformity of "the Islamic cities."

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MODEL

By the 1960s, French hegemony over the field of urban studies was on the decline. Likewise, as more scholars from various fields began to explore urban-related issues, the notion that all "Islamic cities" fit the same mold started to unravel. Andre Raymond considers the publication of Gibb and Bowen's *Islamic Society and the West* in 1957 to be the last hurrah of the

[47] G. E. Von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Muslim City," in idem, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London, 1961): 141–159.

Orientalist-Eurocentric juggernaut.[48] In the years that followed, this approach was eclipsed by a wave of more nuanced historical and geographical works. The argument can be made that the above-mentioned works of Geertz and Eickelman presaged this shift. Ira Lapidus's groundbreaking study on the Syrian city during "the later Middle Ages" stresses the importance of periodization. Accordingly, his analysis places the cities in their historical epoch(s).[49] Although the title of Lapidus's book, *Muslim Cities in Later Middle Ages*, evokes an Orientalist mindset, the work poses pertinent questions and challenges earlier (mis)conceptions. Alternatively, Eugen Wirth's studies concentrate on the geography of cities and their physical space, exploring the unique morphological traits of what he referred to as "the Oriental city." In Wirth's estimation, the bazaar is the only part of the Oriental city that might be of Islamic provenance.[50]

There has indeed been a marked increase in research and conferences on the Islamic/Middle Eastern/Arab city since the late 1960s.[51] The scholarly yield from these activities evinces the growing discontent with earlier generalizations about cities in the Middle East. For example, Albert Hourani succinctly illustrates this problem in his introduction to *The Islamic City*: "In the light of recent research…, it is clear that in some respects the problem has been falsely presented."[52]

Edward Said's conception of *Orientalism* has also made itself felt in the field of urbanism.[53] In coining this term, Said was excoriating what he deemed to be the West's constructions and reconstructions of other cultures, societies, and histories. Furthermore, he demonstrated the importance of the relationship between the intellectual (who actively engages in the reconstruction of historical pictures) and prevailing power structures, not least the power-knowledge nexus. Above all, Said enabled scholars of Islam and Islamic societies to reflect on the connections between text and context and between author, text, and the very writing of history. Due to

[48] A. Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21/1 (1994), 8.

[49] I. M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

[50] E. Wirth, "Zum Problems des Bazar (sūq, çarsi)," *Der Islam* 51/2 (1974): 203–260.

[51] For an exhaustive list of these conferences and publications, see M. E. Bonine, "Islamic Urbanism, Urbanites, and the Middle Eastern City," in Y. Choueiri (ed.), *A Companion to the History of the Middle East* (Malden, MA, 2005), 394.

[52] A. H. Hourani, "Introduction; The Islamic City in Light of Recent research," in A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), 14.

[53] Needless to say, Said's theory has attracted innumerable responses. Said himself addressed some of these issues in, idem, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique* (1985) 1: 89–107. This article may also serve as a cursory survey of the Said literature.

the splash that *Orientalism* made, prominent researchers of urbanism in Muslim societies were basically empowered to cast doubt on hitherto ironclad consensual views. In this respect, the most influential and thought-provoking challenges to erstwhile perceptions of the Islamic city have undoubtedly been put forth by Janet Abu Lughod and Andre Raymond, both of whom believe that this model derives from the work of the aforementioned French scholars. The former analyzes the historical development of this term and exposes its inconsistencies. Above all, Abu Lughod demonstrates the haste with which the notion of homogeneous Islamic cities entered the consensus, as conclusions were reached despite the dearth of empirical evidence at the time. Raymond surveys the more recent studies (his own included) that point to the shortcomings of this paradigm. Both Abu Lughod and Raymond discuss the Orientalist bias of scholars who espoused the all-encompassing notion of the Islamic city. Since the early 1980s, more scholars have shunned this approach to historical Middle Eastern cities. Instead, they have focused their own research on distinct periods and geographical settings.[54] For example, Suraiya Faroqhi specializes in seventeenth-century Ottoman-Anatolian cities. In her concluding remarks, Faroqhi reflects on some of the problems of attempting to devise a prototype of the Islamic city:

> The claim that religion should have determined residential patterns to as great an extent as von Grunebaum has assumed has made the present author very uneasy. Such an assumption would imply that there is no change in social mores, and that as a result, the manner in which people used and regarded their buildings did not change over centuries. If this were true, then the whole notion of Ottoman social history would be all but meaningless.[55]

In addition to the growing awareness of geographical and historical particularities, we have borne witness to a shift toward studies that focus on specific cultural and religious phenomena, such as gender and spatial segregation, endowments. and legal conceptions of the city.[56]

[54] See, for example, M. Haneda and T. Miura (eds.), *Islamic Urban Studies: Historical Review and Perspective* (London, 1994).

[55] S. Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance. House Owners and House Property in Seventeenth-Century Ankara and Kayseri* (Cambridge, 1987), 220–221.

[56] For instance, Johansen demonstrates that Islamic jurisprudence did in fact perceive the city to be a legal entity, thereby refuting those scholars who claimed that the city was a nonexistent entity from the standpoint of Islamic law; B. Johansen, "The All Embracing Town and Its Mosques: al-Mir al-Gami," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 32 (1981–2): 139–161.

In the meantime, the efforts to unearth the contours of the Islamic city have tapered off considerably, as more students have come to the realization that the paradigm's generalizations are flawed. Nevertheless, as Michael Bonine has already noted, the quest for the Islamic city has endured[57] among urban planners and architects who continue to defend its relevancy. For example, in his architectural study of the "Arabic-Islamic cities," Hakim argues that their development adheres to notions and precepts from the Quran and Hadith.[58] Stefano Bianca – an architect and urban planner with vast experience in the Middle East – painstakingly demonstrates how Islam, in its capacity as an all-embracing religion, was probably the most dominant factor in the development of the built environment within the political-cultural sphere of "the Muslim city."[59]

Although the conceptual model of the Islamic city is no longer fashionable among urban historians and geographers, it is still relevant to, and quite pervasive in, other disciplines, especially among laymen or scholars who are less familiar with the problems and fallacies of the Orientalist perspective. For instance, the Islamic city is still featured in many introductory courses on urban geography and even on the history of the Middle East. Throughout the pages of this book, I expound on the ramifications of this conceptual model and show why the notion of the Islamic city distorts the picture of urbanism in the Middle East.

BOOK STRUCTURE

Part A: Introduction

Introduction

In my opening remarks, I unfurl the key questions and main objectives of this book. The work falls under the heading of urbanism in general and urbanism in the Middle East in particular. To begin, I outline my principal argument, according to which cities should be explored in their cultural context. Thereafter, I contend that the research of urbanism in the Middle East has been heavily influenced by Western urban theory. In my estimation, Weber's ideas on this topic epitomize the conceptualization of the

[57] Bonine, "Islamic Urbanism."

[58] B. S. Hakim, *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* (London, 1986). See Raymond, "Islamic City," 17, n. 44, for a direct response to Hakim's methodological assumptions.

[59] S. Bianca, *Urban Form in the Arab World: Past and Present* (London and New York, 2000).

Islamic city in the eyes of the founders of Middle Eastern urbanism. As a result, the field's inception was characterized by a negative, Orientalist approach to the Muslim city. Due to the flaws in this approach, it is incumbent upon scholars to avail themselves of more circumscribed and less ambitious historical and geographical definitions.

Chapter 1: Urban History of **al-Shām** *before the Mamluks*

This chapter sketches the historical urban developments in and characteristics of *al-Shām* before the Mamluks' rise to power through the lens of my principal case studies – Tripoli, Safad, and Jerusalem. Moreover, I explain the logic behind focusing on these cities during the Mamluk period. In so doing, I provide the reader with the backdrop – the urban traits of Syrian cities – to the subsequent developments that constitute the primary interest of this book. In other words, this survey sets the stage for the discussion on the change and continuity that informed the urban landscape throughout the Mamluk era.

Part B – The Tangible City

Chapter 2: Reading the Built Environment: A Field Survey of Mamluk Jerusalem

In this chapter, I showcase the survey that I conducted of the built environment of *al-Shām* during the Mamluk era with the objective of shedding light on the morphology of its cities. The survey itself focused on Jerusalem, but I subsequently corroborated the findings with the other case studies. To begin, I establish a set of benchmarks for the survey of the entire city. Drawing on the well-documented Mamluk monumental architecture as my starting point, I explore the vernacular-cum-private architecture that comprised the majority of the Mamluk city's built environment. The results of the survey are further elucidated by a series of photographs and a map of the Old City of Jerusalem. Moreover, I contrast and compare the landscape of Jerusalem with that of Safad and Tripoli.

Following the in-depth look at these cities, I attempt to project the insights that were gleaned from the case studies on the region at large. More specifically, this chapter substantiates the existence of a vernacular building language during the Mamluk period that applied to all the cities of *al-Shām*. This lexicon clearly shows that preferred building methods and styles trumped religious, ethnic, or any other cultural differentiations. Similar to most urban dwellers, the residents of these cities habitually

abided by a code of fashion and building criteria that transcended certain social definitions. In sum, the field survey yielded significant results on the local level, enabling me to render a glossary of architectural terms that were prevalent in the Mamluk cities. Furthermore, the survey demonstrates that, as a rule, it is indeed possible to develop methods and methodologies for examining the urban morphology of historical cities.

Chapter 3: Houses and Residential Solutions in the Cities of al-Shām

The third chapter focuses on urban residential units. By virtue of the field survey results, I describe the types of houses – private and communal – that informed the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*. Moreover, I analyze the layout of houses on the basis of legal documentation and local accounts. Toward the end of this chapter, I explore the "Islamic attributes" of the courtyard house (*dār*). This type of urban housing is so commonplace in Syria and other "Muslim" regions that it was deemed the quintessential Islamic abode. However, the present study makes it abundantly clear that there were also other forms of housing on the Syrian urban landscape.

Chapter 4: The Neighborhood: Social and Physical Expressions of Urban Culture

This chapter discusses the nature of residential neighborhoods and their impact on the urban landscape. Drawing on Eickelman's anthropological study of modern Bujaad, I put an emphasis on the social, rather than the physical, dimension of neighborhoods in historical cities.[60] However, before delving into the social aspects of neighborhoods, I examine the traditional physical characteristics that were ascribed to neighborhoods against the backdrop of earlier scholarly conceptions of the historical Syrian quarter (most notably the works of Sauvaget and Lapidus).[61] The chapter then turns to the social realm, which I found to be more flexible and amorphous and less spatially segregated than previously believed. The argument can be made that the residential quarter was one of the most conspicuous parts of the Mamluk city. Although cultural-religious norms and constraints played a role in the primacy of the neighborhood, I believe

[60] D. F. Eickelman, "Is there an Islamic City? The Making of a Quarter in a Moroccan City," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1974): 274–294.

[61] Sauvaget, "Esquisse d'une hitsoire de la ville de Damas," 422–480; ibid., *Alep, essai sur le development d'une grande ville syrienne, des origins au milieu de xixe siècle* (Paris, 1941); and Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*.

that this phenomenon largely stemmed from many of the ingrained features of human interaction in pre-modern cities.

Part C: The Socially Constructed City

Chapter 5: Endowments and Urban Infrastructure

Chapter 5 explores the urban phenomenon of endowments, which has already merited a great deal of scholarly attention. However, given their profound influence on urban infrastructure, I have devoted an entire chapter to this topic.[62] As expected, the chapter opens with an exposition of the different types of *awqāf* and how they operated. I then touch on the way they were understood, as well as the attendant controversies that arose, in previous studies.

The chapter then turns to more specific aspects of this topic. To begin, I analyze the manner in which the leadership used endowments as a policy-making tool. I then compare *waqf* activities in different Syrian cities. As a legal apparatus, endowments were skillfully employed to accommodate both personal (a *waqf* was a private commitment and initiative) and public needs. For example, I offer numerous examples of the key role that *awqāf* played in the execution of urban projects and policies. That said, as we shall see, this institution had its fair share of problems.

Chapter 6: Icons of Power in the Built Environment: The Politics of Mamluk Patronage

One of the strategies that the Mamluk elite adopted to safeguard their hegemonic power and establish or reinforce their legitimacy among urban communities was the politics of patronage, which featured a wide range of building projects.[63] The underlying premise of this discussion is that, besides the leadership's private and personal motives, the Mamluks' urban policy was driven by the constant need to negotiate their status among their subjects and clients. With this in mind, this chapter explores

[62] Behrens-Abousief goes so far as to suggest that it would be redundant to emphasize the *waqf*'s role in the administration of funds that were allotted to urban development; D. Behrens-Abousief, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule. Institution, Waqf, & Architecture in Cairo (16th–17th Centuries)* (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1994), 5.

[63] In his classic work on preindustrial cities, Sjoberg pointed to four strategies that the elite adopted to preserve their hegemonic status. G. Sjoberg, *The Pre-Industrial City, Past and Present* (Glenco, 1960), 224–230. Sjoberg also further develops Weber's inquiries into the legitimacy of the social order; M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (tr. A. M. Anderson and T. Peassons) (Glencoe, 1947).

the symbolic and ideological nature of public and monumental buildings and offers a critical reading of the "expressive intent"[64] of the Mamluk elite's activities and impact on the urban landscape. More specifically, I examine the construction of citadels, mosques, *madarasas*, Sūfī lodges, and pilgrimage centers (*ribāṭs*) in an effort to discern their functions and meanings. My analysis reveals that buildings projects were not executed on a random basis; their purpose, location, and form accorded with the builder's needs, desires, and wherewithal. The Mamluks' utilization of certain monuments and buildings should be viewed as part of the patron-client relations they nurtured with the learned strata of the Muslim community. These projects advanced the Mamluks' perpetual need to bolster their legitimacy among their direct constituency (the Muslim urban population) while also serving to exhibit their religious piety and helping leaders fulfil their personal aspirations.

Part D: The Conceptualized City

Chapter 7: Cities Scripted, Envisioned, and Perceived

This chapter explores various physical and mental maps of Syrian cities. To begin, I evaluate the conception of the city – real and imagined – in the eyes of two *qadis* who lived and practiced in the region: Shams al-Dīn Al-ʿUthmanī and Mujīr al-Dīn al-ʿUlaymī.[65] Al-ʿUthmanī lived in Safad during the fourteenth century, and Mujīr al-Dīn al-ʿUlaymī (d. 928/1522) was a member of an aristocratic family from Jerusalem. His vision of Jerusalem provides a highly informed and all-too-rare account of Mamluk *al-Shām*. Mujīr al-Dīn's elaborate narrative on his hometown divulges a mental map of the city that greatly differs from the physical urban layout of his time. Thereafter, I contrast and compare the insights from the *qadis'* accounts with travelers' descriptions of these same cities. These narratives, particularly on Jerusalem and its holy sites, highlight the importance of the observer's cultural background. Not surprisingly, Muslim travelers focused on Islamic institutions and sites, whereas Christians and Jews were more interested in their own cultural and religious spaces. Overall, most of the authors reveal an intriguing myopia that underscores their different places of origin and cultural backgrounds.

[64] R. S Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 69–120.

[65] See B. Lewis, "An Arabic Account of the Province of Safed," *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 477–488; and Mujīr al-Dīn al-Hanbalī al-Ulaymī, *Al-Uns al-Jaīil bī-T'aīikh al-Quds w-al-Khalīl* (Al-Najf, 1973) (two vols.).

Chapter 8: The Public Sphere: Urban Autonomy and Its Limitations

Chapter 8 expounds on the relationship between Mamluks and urban society by plumbing the nature of the public sphere. The Mamluks filled a pivotal role in the development of the urban built environment in Syria and Egypt. Their economic and political supremacy enabled them to control the cities, dictate the objectives of building projects, construct their flagship institutions, and maintain, or intentionally neglect, urban infrastructures. Drawing on Habermas' insights on this topic, as well as on those of his critics, I explore the public sphere in Mamluk cities and assess the extent and limitations of their urban autonomy.[66] The chapter analyzes four case studies of conflicts pitting Mamluk officials against urban communities. In so doing, I shed light on the dialectics of space and society in the public sphere. Simply put, I not only describe the framework of the negotiations and the social-political implications of each dispute, but the spatiality of the event by revealing where it took place, who controlled the space in question, and who set the tone for the urban public milieu. My research indicates that, although the Mamluk public sphere was heavily controlled by the political, economic, and military elite, urban society nevertheless had at least partial means, opportunities, and, accordingly, spatiality for voicing its opinions and resisting the decisions handed down by its rulers.

CONCLUSION

The research on the urban history of the Middle East has long been encumbered by two predicaments. The first is what I dub "living in the shadow of greatness," namely, that the major scholars during the field's formative stages were either consciously or subconsciously influenced by a European outlook, whereby the Middle Eastern city is deficient, inferior to its Western counterpart, and largely inert. In recent years, substantial efforts have been made to "take the chip off our shoulder," and this book hopes to contribute to this enterprise. The second difficulty is posed by the scarcity of sources on the region's cities prior to the sixteenth century. By concentrating on the cultural urban landscape and scrutinizing its built

[66] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (tr. T. Burger) (Cambridge, 1992).

environment, I offer a new approach and methodology for reading historical cities.

Throughout the pages of this study, the Mamluk city is portrayed through three lenses: the tangible, the socially constructed, and the conceptualized. By dint of a comparison of Jerusalem, Safad, and Tripoli, as well as through insights from other cities, I establish the very existence of a Mamluk city and demonstrate that there was indeed a sense of Mamluk urbanism. In addition to offering its own account of Mamluk urbanism, the book addresses the conceptual model of "the Islamic city." I contend that the cities of *Bilād al-Shām*, like any other city, are the product and processes of multiple forces that have conjointly and perpetually shaped them. The concept of "the Islamic city" is a misguided analytic construction that has long worn out its welcome. Nevertheless, the use of this term and classification still lingers within the field itself and thrives in other urban disciplines. By exploring Mamluk cities in their historicocultural context and by engaging with general urban theories, I hope to further undermine the notion of "the Islamic city." This effort is geared toward emancipating Mamluk cities from past generalizations and presenting them as full-fledged cities. Furthermore, my analysis shows that neither Islamic perceptions nor religious demands proved to be the primary forces that shaped the "Oriental" city. Many factors, whether in tandem or at odds with each other, contributed to the development of the Syrian urban landscape during the Mamluk period. Only by deciphering the many cultures that coexisted on its streets and squares and the diverse elements of the Mamluk city's urban landscape can we hope to improve our understanding of its highly complex nature.

1

Urban Regional History before the Mamluks

Presenting Tripoli, Safad, and Jerusalem

"What is the city," Shakespeare's Sicinius asks in the third act of *Coriolanus* and immediately answers, "but the people."[1] Thus, concisely, Shakespeare touches on the essence of the city: its human actors. Numerous students of the city have been at pains to explain its uniqueness and in what ways it differentiates from its rural counterpart, the village. Ibn Khaldun argued that the city is indeed the summit of human developments. Modern theorists, such as Tonnies and Simmel, have focused our attention on the special social "spices" that make the urban world such a mesmerizing human phenomenon. Weber, in his seminal work, emphasized time and again its social structure, political organization, and cultural complexity as the foundation stones of the city. Obviously, what makes the city a city is not its spatiality or any of its physical qualities. There is no physical quality that might be suggested as uniquely urban that cannot be found in rural settlements. Surely, contemporary cities are gargantuan entities, and their size and density indeed differentiate them from nonurban phenomena. But, be that as it may, these characteristics are not so easily discerned in cities prior to the modern era or, better yet, prior to the Industrial Revolution. The things that separate the city from other social structures and transform it into such a spellbinding human accomplishment have not changed in essence since it first emerged on the world stage: its complexity, diversity, specialists, literacy, hierarchy, social stratification, and nonagrarian-based economic infrastructure are but the main issues that come to mind. Indeed, the city is an "urban drama" and the place where the human drama always reaches new heights.[2] Before we delve into issues concerning

[1] William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 3.1.199.

[2] The description of the city as an urban drama is drawn from Mumford, *The City in History*, 184.

the urbanism of the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, it is relevant to bear in mind the historical (and prehistorical) roots of the city and urbanism in the region. In this chapter, I focus on the urban history and urban form of the main case studies prior to the Mamluk period.

One of the most important and intriguing evolutions in human history is surely the urban transformation. By and large, the city is a product of a long evolutionary process during which some of the earliest human agrarian settlements (some as old as 10,000–15,000 BC) gradually evolved into complex cities.[3] The emergence of cities is materialistically documented by the appearance of artifacts that are no longer the tools of a farmer or hunter or merely domestic household items for daily use. What Childe had aptly named "the Urban Revolution" is clearly attested to in the emergence of "temple furniture, weapons, wheel-made pots . . . and others [sic] manufactures turned out on a large scale by skilled artisans."[4] In his magnum opus, *Man Makes Himself*, Childe suggests a three-stage system or three main shifts in human evolution. Through these shifts, Childe tries to demarcate phases of human development throughout prehistory and history. The first phase is the Neolithic Revolution, in which hunter-gatherer cultures moved to settled agriculture; the second is the movement from Neolithic agriculture to complex, hierarchal systems of manufacturing and trade that took place during the late fourth and early third millennia BC; namely, the Urban Revolution. The third shift, according to Childe, is the Industrial Revolution. Childe's theory has been often called into question. Mellaarat, who studied the great urban centers of the Anatolian plateau, predates the birth of the city (in that region) by a few thousand years.[5] Others have criticized Childe's Marxist-materialistic approach, particularly the fact that he prioritized society's material base over its intellectual superstructure.[6] A pertinent case in point is Mumford's paradigm of the emergence of the city. Mumford accentuates cultural-intellectual developments as the harbingers of the city:

> Historically, the increase of population, through the change from hunting to agriculture, may have abetted this change; the widening of trade routes and the diversification of occupations likewise helped. But the nature of the city is not to be

[3] T. Hall, *Urban Geography* (London and New York, 1998), 5.
[4] V. Gordon Childe, *Man Makes Himself* (London, 1936).
[5] J. Mellaarat, *Earliest Civilizations of the Near East* (New York, 1965).
[6] See, for example, R. T. Legates and F. Stout (eds.), *The City Reader* (London and New York, 1996), 20–21.

found simply in its economic base: the city is primarily a social emergent. The mark of the city is its purposive social complexity.[7]

Although they were worlds apart and in spite of their differences – chronologically, geographically, and doubtless culturally – both Mumford and Ibn Khaldun uphold the city first and foremost as the outcome of a cultural evolution that is superseded by a technological one and not the other way around, as was Childe's argument. In much the same fashion, Sjoeberg calls our attention to the main characteristics of early cities. For him, the signs of early urban entities are a community of substantial size and population density that shelters a variety of nonagricultural specialists, including a literate elite.[8] As previously claimed by Mumford, Sjoeberg locates the transformation of villages into cities in the region at roughly around 3500–3000 BC. It would seem that all major inventions and required knowledge necessary for an urban society were already in existence by about that time. Regardless of the different approaches used to describe the emergence of cities, one can safely say that, by their very essence and appearance on the world stage, cities represent the process of diversification and sophistication typical of human cultures.

The Syrian region or, for that matter, the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin, was one of the first areas to have undergone urban revolution. The city of Jericho has won notoriety as one of the earliest examples of proto-urbanism. It would seem that as early as 8000 BC it already demonstrated distinguished urban traits, such as a densely developed settlement with a massive defense system (e.g., a wall). Kenyon, whose excavations at Jericho are the most extensive, thus inferred that it also had a highly evolved administration even at that early stage.[9] Along with other examples, such as Çatal Hüyük and Hacilar in the Anatolian plateau, Jericho represents a powerful challenge to the accepted view that urban civilization first emerged in Mesopotamia.[10] Against arguments that were raised as to the validity of their definition as towns, it may be likewise argued that these settlements surely stand as representatives of a transformational phase from agricultural to urban communities.[11] During the

[7] Mumford, *The City in History*, 20.
[8] G. Sjoeberg, "The Origins and Evolutions of Cities," *Scientific American* 213/3 (1965): 54–55.
[9] K. Kenyon, *Archeology in the Holy Land* (London, 1960).
[10] A. E. J. Morris, *History of Urban Form before the Industrial Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Harlow, Essex, 1994), 19.
[11] See, for example, G. Daniel, *The First Civilizations: The Archeology of Their Origins* (London, 1968). Daniel argues that these were not really cities but rather small undeveloped towns or proto-towns.

fourth and third millennia (the Bronze Age), more settlements demonstrated urban signs and development. Jaffa and Acre along the shores of the Mediterranean; Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, and Nablus on the central ridge of Palestine; and Damascus and Aleppo at the northern parts of the region represent no more than a cursory inventory. These urban centers and others witnessed the arrival of new cultures and rulers in the region and consequently transformed themselves.

The Greeks and Greek urban perceptions have made significant contributions to the region's urban history.[12] As of the tenth century BC, the Greeks were involved in the construction of new cities in different parts (mostly coastal areas) of the Mediterranean. This colonizing movement was responsible for three related developments: first, the increase in the number of towns; second, the elaboration of new urban concepts and plans; and, third, the introduction of a new sociopolitical concept of the city.[13] The new political atmosphere instigated by the physical conquest of the Macedonians under Alexander the Great (336–323 BC) had a tremendous effect on the growth and development of a new urban model in the region: the Hellenistic town. Specifically, the plan of the Greek city (*polis*) was thus introduced and replicated, either partially or fully, throughout the region. These new city plans were characterized by systematic city planning and the development of typical urban infrastructures and institutions, such as the acropolis, agora, theater, and the like. Their most notable feature is the grid or orthogonal road system, which is commonly associated with Hippodamus of Miletus (498–408 BC), an ancient Greek architect whose planning in various cities earned him the title "the father of town planning."[14] Although Hippodamus did not invent this system, he reintroduced it to the region. The Hippodamian concept was thus implemented in parts of existing towns and, of course, in newly established urban centers. This radical change – namely, the emergence of a planned city – was even more pronounced under the expanding Roman Empire, from the second century BC onward.

Under the Roman Empire, the Syrian region went through an impressive surge of urbanism. New cities were formed, and old cities went through considerable transformation in accordance with rigorous

[12] For the Greek city and its urban history, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford, 1940).

[13] J.M. Wagstaff, "The Origin and Evolution of Towns: 4000 BC to 1900 AD," in G.H. Blake and R.I. Lawless (eds.), *The Changing Middle Eastern City* (London, 1980), 16.

[14] Morris, *History of Urban Form*, 43.

Roman planning perceptions.[15] The area was indeed so saturated with urban centers that, as of the late third century AD and up to the Islamic conquest (the Late Antiquity), new cities were rarely constructed. From the fourth decade of the seventh century AD to the Mamluk period, the region was, by and large, controlled by Islamic rulers, with the grave exception of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. Throughout this time, cities underwent considerable changes as far as their landscape, social and cultural content, and, needless to say, political transformations were concerned.

By the time of the Islamic conquest of the region in the seventh century AD, many of these cities had lost their vitality and their roles as economic and cultural centers, with the visible outcome being a waning organized and geometrical urban layout evolving into a more spontaneous urban landscape. Kennedy is at pains to demonstrate this point because it serves his claim that the Muslim conquest was not responsible for the decline of cities in the region.[16] As the volume of archeological data from the Byzantine–Early Muslim transition period grows, it seems that cities went through some form of rejuvenation following the Islamic conquest.[17] Be that as it may, one thing is clear: hardly any cities were constructed under the various manifestations of Islamic rule. Exceptions to this dictum were two new cities built in Syria by the Umayyad: al-Ramla and Anjar.[18] They were each constructed to serve as the capital of their respective province (*jund*).[19]

One of the more intriguing features of urbanism during the Mamluk period in Syria is the creation of new urban entities and the execution of urban projects on a rather large scale, at least when compared with former periods in the region. The Mamluks invested in settlements that were hitherto not full-fledged cities and transformed them into provincial urban centers. A case in point is Sultan Baybars's (1260–1279) initiatives in Safad, which turned it into a major regional city. Likewise,

[15] A. H. M. Jones, "The Urbanization of Palestine," *Journal of Roman Studies* 21 (1931): 75–88.

[16] H. Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 3–27.

[17] For a comparative analysis of early types of cities and urban styles shortly after the Islamic conquest, see D. Whitcomb, "The Walls of Early Islamic Ayla; Defence or Symbol?," in H. Kennedy (ed.), *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria. From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 61–74.

[18] D. Sourdel, "La fondation Umayyade d'al-Ramla en Palestine," in H. R. Roemer and A. Noth (eds.), *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients: Festschrift fuer Bertold Spuler zum Siebzigsten Geburstag* (Leiden, 1981), 387–395.

[19] N. Luz, "Umayyad al-Ramla – An Urban Innovation in Palestine," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 7/1 (April, 1997): 27–54.

Ibn Thagrī-Birdī, an authority on the period in question, depicts the emergence of another village:

> And behold the city of Gaza which was turned into a city and was rendered into this format by him [the Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥmmad ibn Qalāwūn (1311–1340)], as it was previously on par with the other villages of *al-Shām*.... Beforehand, it was but an agriculture estate (*ḍayʿa*) from [among] the estates of Ramla.[20]

With respect to Tripoli, the Mamluks completely rebuilt a preexisting city in a new location.[21] Alternatively, in Jerusalem, the empire's officials gradually expanded into new areas of the city. To gain insight on these developments, it behooves us to survey the urban trends and characteristics of *al-Shām* before the rise of the Mamluks, a task that will be pursued through the prism of three case studies: Jerusalem, Safad, and Tripoli.

JERUSALEM: A CITY IN CONSTANT TRANSITION

Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world. Its urban history is rich, convoluted, constantly changing, and – what is highly important for this study – heavily documented. In 70 AD, the city was completely razed by the Romans. The ruined city would undergo a drastic metamorphosis in 135 AD and be reconstructed as a Roman colony: Colonia Aelia Capitolina.[22] The importance of this change lies in the fact that, from the second century AD to the present, the basic layout of the city (what is called today the Old City) is still a direct result of Roman urban planning. Despite all the changes that took place over the years, the street pattern, main urban centers, and focal points adhere to and rely on, by and large, the Roman city plan.

The Christianization process of the Roman Empire directly affected the urban landscape of Jerusalem. Hand in hand with its growing religious importance, the city expanded, experiencing numerous building projects, mainly of a religious nature. Thus, dozens of churches and monasteries, as well as pilgrimage centers, inns, and other related facilities, were

[20] Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Muluk Miṣr waʾl-Qāhira* 9 (Cairo, 1930), 41.

[21] N. Luz, "Tripoli Reinvented: A Case of Mamluk Urbanization," in Y. Lev (ed.), *Towns and Material Culture in the Medieval Middle East* (Leiden, 2002), 52–72.

[22] J. Germer-Durand, "Aelia Capitolina," *Revue Biblique* 1 (1892): 369–387. See also B. Isaac, "Jerusalem from the Great Revolt to the Reign of Constantine 70–312 CE," in Y. Tsafrir and S. Safrai (eds.), *The History of Jerusalem. The Roman and Byzantine Periods (70–638 CE)* (Jerusalem, 1999), 6–10.

constructed.[23] Indeed, during the Late Antiquities, the city experienced an extensive growth in population and size. However, the southern parts of the city, which were developed mainly from the fourth century AD, are far less organized and neatly ordered when compared to the northern parts of the city.[24] On the eve of the Islamic conquest, Jerusalem had already experienced the transformation and changes that are usually ascribed to later periods.[25]

The Islamic conquest of Jerusalem transpired during the 630s AD.[26] Under the Umayyad dynasty (660–750), in the 690s, an elaborate construction project was carried out on the site of the Jewish Temple. The enterprise included the building of a palatial Friday mosque (later known as al-Aqṣā Mosque) and the exquisite Dome of the Rock (constructed in 691).[27] But this period of the city's relative importance was short lived. With the ascendancy of the Abbasid dynasty to power and the shift of the capital of the caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad, Jerusalem became nothing but an insignificant provincial city within a relatively unimportant province. The decay of the city during the ninth to eleventh centuries may be seen in various aspects, but the most obvious one is the construction of the southern wall of the city in a new location. The new wall, which was built in the late tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, meant, for all practical purposes, a significant reduction of city space.[28] The religious status of Jerusalem and its holy Islamic sites was not a mitigating factor, and the city experienced an urban decline for the better part of the Early Islamic period.

The conquest of the city by the Crusaders on July 15, 1099, marked a turning point in its urban history. From a provincial town bereft of any political significance, Jerusalem suddenly became the capital of a kingdom. It was not only the seat of political power, but was also a center for religious organization, military groups, and a bustling commercial town

[23] M. Avi Yona, *The Madaba Mosaic Map* (Jerusalem, 1954).

[24] This marked difference between the northern and southern parts of Jerusalem and the lack of late Roman archeological findings at the southern parts of the city might indicate indeed that the Roman city of Jerusalem was relatively small when compared to that of the later Byzantine period.

[25] This is the gist of Kennedy's argument; see Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina."

[26] F. M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), 151–152.

[27] This intriguing development may well have been connected to an Umayyad decision to transform Jerusalem into their religious-political capital; see A. Elad, "The Status of Jerusalem during the Umayyad Period," *Hamizrach Hechadash* 44 (2004): 17–68.

[28] G. J. Wightman, *The Walls of Jerusalem. From the Canaanites to the Mamluks* (Sydney, 1993), 237–258.

of numerous ethnicities. This situation is aptly transcribed in its urban layout. The city was multifocal, boasting several important centers. The political center developed around the Jaffa Gate, where the palace of the king was erected in 1118. Religious life revolved around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; there were a few military centers, in the form of the military orders and their compounds; and the markets developed along the main streets of the city. Although this Jerusalem maintained the same contours and principal characteristics of the preceding era, the cultural, religious, and demographic changes had a significant impact on its landscape. Put differently, the physical changes, which corresponded to its cultural transformation, were carried out in a gradual fashion atop old urban structures and along the city's existing physical layout.

Following the battle of Hittīn (1187) between Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Ayyūbi (1171–1193) (known as Saladin in European parlance) and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and its resulting reconquest by Muslim forces, the city went through yet another period of transformation. Starting with Saladin, the city experienced a process of (re)Islamization that was physically manifested by the confiscation or purchase of former Christian sites and their transformation into Islamic institutions. This tendency continued under various Ayyūbid rulers during the thirteenth century. In 1219, in response to the siege of Damieta by the forces of the Fifth Crusade, the ruler of Damascus, al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā, ordered the demolition of the wall of Jerusalem.[29] The razing of several parts of the wall left the population exposed to external threats, thereby engendering a mass exodus from the city. In 1229, following the Treaty of Jaffa, Jerusalem once again found itself under Crusader rule. However, the agreement between al-Malik al-Kāmil, the Ayyūbid Sultan of Cairo, and Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen allowed for the continued presence of Muslims. Consequently, Jerusalem was rendered a mixed city, with Frankish and Muslim sections.[30] This unique situation ended in the summer of 1244, when Khwārazmian troops (former soldiers of the Khwārazm-Shāh's dispersed army) took control of the city and massacred its Christian inhabitants.[31] Consequently, Jerusalem was returned to the Ayyūbids and remained under their dominion until the death of the last Ayyūbid sultan

[29] M. Sharon, "The Ayyūbid Walls of Jerusalem. A New Inscription from the Time of al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā," in M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), 179–193.

[30] D. Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford, 1992), 185–194.

[31] R. S. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols* (Albany, 1977), 275.

of Egypt, al-Muʿaẓẓam Tūrān Shāh (in 1250).[32] It was only after an interim period, which Robert Irwin aptly termed the "turbulent decade," and the Battle of ʿAyn Jālūt (1260) that the Baḥrī Mamluks consolidated their hold on Jerusalem.[33]

On the eve of the Mamluk period, Jerusalem remained a multifocal city. It harbored several religious, political, and commercial centers. The state of the walls was indicative of the state and status of the city in the transition period of Ayyūbid-Crusader-Mamluk rule: partly in ruin and mostly dysfunctional. The political events that preceded the Mamluk sultanate's direct rule of the city led to a demographic and economic decline, an unsustainable and unsecured environment, and complete chaos. Needless to say, the city was in a state of urban disarray.

SAFAD: THE BUDDING OF A NEW CITY

Safad, or a settlement carrying a similar name (*Sefh* in one of the major sources),[34] has existed in the upper Galilee since the Bronze Age. It varied in importance and size during different periods, but it never gained more than local significance until the twelfth century AD, under the first Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem.[35] To this point, it was never more than a village, and not a very prominent one at that.[36] The village was located at the bottom of a protruding hill, which, during the Mamluk period, came to be known as Burj Yatim.[37] Its location at the hub of very rugged terrain, its lack of a reliable source of water, and the local soil that renders conventional agriculture a continuous challenge have all contributed to its insignificant historical standing during most of its occupancy. The fact that

[32] D. P. Little, "Jerusalem under the Ayyūbids and the Mamlūks 1187–1516," in K. J. ʿAsalī (ed.), *Jerusalem in History* (London and New York, 1997), 185–186.

[33] R. Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks. The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 17. For an analysis of the "turbulent decade," namely, the years spanning the end of the Ayyūbid reign in Egypt and the beginning of Baybars' sultanate, see R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 26–36.

[34] Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 2, 20, 6.

[35] R. Amitai-Preiss, "Ṣafad," *EI*^{2} 8: 757–759.

[36] The fact that Safad lacked urban characteristics prior to the conquest of Baybars is also attested to in Y. Drory, "Founding a New Mamlaka: Some Remarks Concerning Safed and the Organization of the Region in the Mamluk Period," in M. Winter and A. Levanoni (eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 163–187.

[37] ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Aʿlāq al-Khaṭira fī Dhikr Umarā al-Shām wa-'l-Jazīra* (ed. S. Dahhān) (Damascus, 1963), 146.

Yaqūt al-Ḥammawī (1229), in his geographical survey, locates Safad in northern Syria facing Hims firmly attests to its insignificance prior to the Mamluk era,[38] for otherwise he would have surely known its true location.

A Crusader fortress was constructed there in 1168, above the settlement. This added significantly to the security and viability of the area and of Safad in particular. The small settlement's main livelihood depended on supplying goods and services to the fortress and to whoever used the main road stretching from Acre to the Jordan Valley. In his description of 1179, William of Tire refers to Safad as both a town (*oppidum*) and a fortress (*castrum*).[39] Notwithstanding, as with other places at that time, the existence of a fortress that increased safety was followed by growing commercial activities and hence a growth of the settlement.[40] In 1188, the forces of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn took Safad from the hands of the Crusaders. It was given as an *Iqṭāʿ*, along with Tiberias, to a certain officer by the name of Sʿad al-Dīn Masʿūd. Safad was taken from this officer's family by al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā in 616/1217.[41] During his short period at the helm as the governor of Damascus, al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā launched a project that would mark a new phase in the history of Safad. Similar to his military strategy in Jerusalem, al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā ordered the complete demolition of the fortress of Safad during the Crusaders' siege of Damieta in 1219,[42] with the objective of preempting the Franks' return. In any event, Safad would remain under the direct control of Damascus until it was handed back to the Franks in 638/1240.[43]

In 638/1240, in accordance with a peace treaty signed by al-Malik al-Ṣaliḥ ʿIsmaʿil and Thibault V, count of Champagne, Safad once again changed hands.[44] After its delivery to the Franks, the task of renovating its fortress was entrusted to the Templars, at the initiative of Benoit d'Alignian, Bishop of Marçais.[45] The project lasted three years, and the costs were extravagant. The fortress was considered large enough to hold more than 2,000 soldiers in times of war. The restoration of the fortress led

[38] Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mʿujam al-Buldān* (ed. F. Wüstenfeld) (Leipzig, 1866), 3: 399.
[39] William of Tire, cited in Z. Razi, "The Principality of the Galilee during the Twelfth Century," (unpublished MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1970), 118.
[40] See a similar situation in R. Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 1998), 97–120.
[41] In the dual-date system used in this book, the first date refers to the Hijri year, whereas the second date refers to the common Gregorian calendar (AD).
[42] Ibn Shaddād, *Al-Aʿlāq al-Khaṭira*, 147.
[43] Humpherys, *Saladin*, 142–143.
[44] Humpherys, *Saladin*, 266.
[45] D. Pringle, "Reconstructing the Castle of Safad," *PEQ* 127 (1985): 139–149.

to the renewal of the settlement therein. The fortress housed a large force and was in constant need of goods and services, which were duly supplied by the fast-growing settlement beneath it. The following description of the construction of the fortress by Benoit d'Alignian reveals the nature of this settlement:

> However, it should not be forgotten that below the castle of Saphet in the direction of Acre (namely, due west), there is a town or large village [*burgus sive ville magne*] where there is a market and numerous inhabitants and which can be defended from the castle.[46]

This very general description of a *burgus*/suburb located west of the fortress is about as much as we have as far as the urban traits or layout of Crusader Safad is concerned. How many people had actually resided there? Was it surrounded by a wall? What was the street pattern? These and other questions cannot be answered, nor does it seem likely that we will be able to learn more in the future. Presently, a full-scale archeological excavation has not been executed, and it is highly doubtful that, after the severe earthquakes that have shaken the city since the thirteenth century, such an endeavor would indeed shed more light on the nature of the Crusaders' Safad.[47] However, it may be inferred that, during the thirteen century, it demonstrated various urban traits because it was reported to have a market and a Bourgeoisie court – two indications of its urban status.[48]

After a six-week siege in 1266, the city fell to Baybars (1260–1277). Thereafter, he embarked on a major project to renovate the destroyed fortress and establish an adjacent civilian neighborhood. Baybars also ordered the construction of two mosques: one in the fortress and another in a newly established suburb (Rabaḍ).[49] In addition, he had the Crusader suburb demolished. Given the fact that no remains have been found,[50]

[46] R. B. C. Huygens, "Un nouveau texte de traite 'Du Constructione castri Saphet,'" *Studi Medievali* 3rd series 6/1 (1965): 355–387.

[47] Two major earthquakes took place, in 1759 and 1837. Although Masterman holds the 1759 one to be more severe, Conder and Kitchener (of the Palestine Exploration Fund) regard the latter as the most lethal. Regardless, following the 1837 event, the fortress was completely ruined and so were other parts of the city. See E. W. G. Masterman, "Safed," *PEFQS* (1914): 168–179; C. R. Conder, and H. H. Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine* (London, 1881), 1: 256.

[48] Livre de Jean d'Iblin, 419; cited in Razi, "The Principality of the Galilee," 118, n. 269.

[49] Nāṣir al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh al-Duwal waʾl Mulūk* 7 (ed. Q. Zurayk) (Beirut, 1942), 122.

[50] ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Malik al-ẓāhir* (Beirut, 1403/1983), 353.

there are almost no clues as to the Christian neighborhood's layout, location, or physical characteristics. Following the conquest, Baybars decided to turn Safad into a provincial center. In consequence, the renovated fortress became the political-military center, and the suburb became the new civilian heart of Mamluk Safad. What is more, this evidence suggests that the city served as the capital of its administrative region for the first time in its history.[51]

TRIPOLI: URBAN DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING THE MAMLUK CONQUEST

Tripoli was originally established as a Phoenician colony during the eighth century BC.[52] It comprised three independent suburbs. In the fourth century BC, it was selected as the political center of the Phoenician confederacy, and it was then that the three quarters were transformed into one city called "Tri-Polis," that is, *three cities*.[53] Under the Seleucids, and later under the Roman Empire, the city flourished. In 14/635, the city was captured by an Islamic army sent by the governor of Syria, Muʿāwiya ibn abī Sufyān. Throughout the early Muslim period, Tripoli served as an important coastal town, in spite of the numerous political changes and unstable political climate of the eleventh century.[54]

During the First Crusade's march along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean (1099), the city was spared because its walls and fortifications presented the Crusader army with a problem it was not ready to face or solve. The city was captured in 1109, after Raymond of Toulouse ordered the construction of a fortress on top of the hill facing it, on the bank of the Kadisha River. This fortress and hill were named Mons Peregrinus (i.e., the Pilgrims Hill).[55] Crusader Tripoli was a thriving coastal town and a commercial center, in addition to being the capital of the Tripoli principality. Its walls were strong enough to sustain numerous attacks, but, ultimately, the city succumbed to Mamluk forces in 688/

[51] On Safad and its role as a regional capital, see Drory, "Founding a New Mamlaka."

[52] ʿA. Salam, *Ṭarābulus al-Shām fi Taʿrīkh al-Islāmī* (Alexandria, 1967), 18–19.

[53] P.K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History. From the Earliest Time to the Present* (London, 1957), 153–154.

[54] For an elaborate analysis of the city's history during the early Muslim period, see ʿU. ʿA. al-Tadmurī, *Taʾrīkh Ṭarābulus al-Siyāsī w-al-Ḥidārī ʿAbr al-ʿUṣūr* 1 (Tripoli, 1978), 62–238. See also G. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Muslims. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from 650 to 1500 AD* (London, 1890), 348–350.

[55] al-Malik al-Muʿayyad ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāīl Abū ʿl-Fidā, *Kitab al-Mukhtaṣar fi Akhbar al-Bashar* 2 (Cairo, 1325), 220–221.

1289.[56] The Mamluk conquest would lead to a significant change in the city's location and layout, as the following description of al-Qalqashandī reveals:

> At the beginning it was a Roman town until it was captured by the Muslims in 688 [1289] during the reign of al-Ashraf Khalīl ibn Qalāwūn, may God mercy be on him. But it was razed to the ground and rebuilt a mile away [from its original site] in land and it was named after the previous town and this is the town that exists today.[57]

The relocation of the city presents a dramatic shift from its urban past. The Mamluk Sultan opted to rebuild the city inland and to reconstruct it around the former Crusader's fortress, which was transformed into the urban citadel. The city was located along the Abu Ali River, in an area formerly known as the Valley of Churches, at the western slopes of the Turbul ridge, approximately 4 kilometers from the seashore. The pre-Mamluk city was thus deserted and, with it, the harbor, which was uncared for and partially demolished.[58] Later, mostly during the late fourteenth century and throughout the fifteenth century, the harbor was renovated and regained its status as a central port in the eastern Mediterranean. This reflects a change in the Mamluk strategy with regard to the economic importance of Syrian sea trade.[59] Thus, under the Mamluks, a new city was developed, one carrying the name of its predecessor – Tripoli, or, as it appears in the Arab sources, Ṯarābulus.

During the Mamluk period, these three cities – Jerusalem, Safad, and Tripoli – endured similar political machinations and, to a certain extent,

[56] The consolidation of the Lebanon area was a lengthy process in which the conquest of Tripoli was not the final stage. For the complex hi(story) of the conquest of region and city, see R. Irwin, "The Mamlūk Conquest of the County of Tripoli," in P. W. Edbury (ed.), *Crusade and Settlement* (Cardiff, 1985), 246–250

[57] Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshā'* (Beirut, 1984), 4: 148. Al-Qalqashandī is, of course, mistaken as to the name of the Mamluk ruler who captured the city. The conquest took place while al-Ashraf's father Qalāwūn was still the Sultan.

[58] The relocation of the city away from the sea is consistent with a general Mamluk policy that preferred inner cities to coastal cities. See D. Ayalon, "The Mamluks and the Naval Power: A Phase of the Struggle between Islam and Christian Europe," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 1/8 (1967): 1–12.

[59] E. Ashtor-Strauss, *Levant Trade in the Latter Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983). Throughout this study, Ashtor relates numerous incidents of ships of various Italian communes anchoring and trading at the port of Tripoli.

underwent the same urban developments. They were mostly under the dominion of the Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo, with the lone exception of Tamerlane's invasion in 1399.[60] Although the Mamluks retreated from (and indeed abandoned) northern Syria whenever a Mongol threat materialized, these withdrawals, including the very short interlude of Timurid rule, did not have a lasting impact on the region's urban characteristics. In addition to their common political history, the populace of *al-Shām* was highly influenced by the *longue durée* Islamization of local society.[61] Widespread conversion to Islam and the growing dominance of the area's Islamic communities during the Mamluk period engendered a variety of social and spatial-morphological transformations. The growing sway of Islam had a direct bearing on numerous social structures, institutions, public norms, and social practices, as exhibited by the rise in the number of endowments and the development of local architectural styles. As previously noted, I am not implying that these developments gave rise to so-called Islamic cities, but scholars must recognize the importance of the maturation of Islamic societies throughout the area.

From a historical standpoint, the three case studies did not always share the same urban characteristics or political history. Whereas Jerusalem and Tripoli are both ancient cities that, for the most part, evolved under the same cultural-political conditions, there are significant discrepancies between the two. Safad, a relatively new construct, did not exhibit any urban inclinations until the thirteen century AD. Although the extant data on its nascent urban traits are meagre, Safad clearly owes much of its status as a city to the Mamluk regime. Nevertheless, it acquired many of the same traits that other urban centers in *al-Shām* incorporated during the period in question.

The differences among the three case studies notwithstanding, they were all influenced by Mamluk urban policy, which was fairly consistent throughout the region. One feature of this uniform approach was a preference for building in areas that were previously empty. This policy is quite

[60] For more on the Mamluks' temporary loss of Northern Syria, see Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, 8: 216–235. Also see P. M. Holt et al., *The Cambridge History of Islam* I (Cambridge, 1970), 221–222; and Amitai-Preiss, *Mamluks and Mongols*, 205. The latter alludes to the Mamluk army's tendency to withdraw from Aleppo whenever it came under imminent Mongol threat.

[61] I have dealt with this process and its various implications in *al-Shām*; N. Luz, "Aspects of Islamization of Space and Society in Mamlūk Jerusalem and Its Hinterland," *MSR* 6 (2002): 135–155.

evident with respect to Safad and Tripoli. Along with the expulsion of its Christian population, the conquest of Safad involved the relocation of the settlement's center. In Tripoli, the new regime took a more extreme step, rebuilding the entire city on a new site. On account of its venerated sites, Jerusalem's existing built-up areas could not be moved, but, even there, the Mamluks cultivated the less populated parts of the city surrounding the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.

PART B

THE TANGIBLE CITY

The built environment, or the city's physical dimension, includes everything that was built by human agents, from a small window shutter to edifices as gargantuan as the Taj Mahal. The magnitude of an object is immaterial to the meanings and information that it harbors about the individuals or society that constructed it. Every last detail of the built environment reflects the needs, norms, ideals, and conflicts that exist or existed in any given city. Furthermore, these components are part of a dynamic process in which various elements are constantly being added, expunged, or gradually erode. In short, the built environment is a fascinating and ever-changing medium through which the city reveals both its present self and, with some help from researchers, facets of its history as well.

A city's built environment is divided into two main architectural orders or spheres: the higher order, which is comprised of public infrastructure, institutions, and buildings; and the lower order, which encompasses all the buildings in the private domain.[1] As a rule of thumb, it is safe to assume that public works in the pre-modern era (e.g., schools, fortifications, and municipal infrastructures) were initiated by the state or ruling elite, whereas private structures (the lower order) – also known as "vernacular architecture" – are the cumulative outcome of the efforts of "ordinary" urban residents. In consequence, private endeavors, such as the construction of houses, neighborhoods, and secondary roads, usually took place in residential areas.

[1] For a disquisition on order and hierarchy in urban landscapes, see A. Rapoport, "Culture and the Urban Order," in J. A. Agnew, J. Mercer and D. E. Sopher (eds.), *The City in Cultural Context* (Boston, London, Sydney, 1984), 50–72.

Despite the significance of vernacular architecture, art historians and architects, among others, generally focus on public and monumental architecture. Their studies are classified under broad headings like "Architecture of the Muslim World"[2] or less sweeping toponyms, such as the Middle East, *al-Shām*, and Egypt.[3] Accordingly, works on Mamluk architecture are, by and large, devoted to monumental buildings, most of which were constructed by imperial officials of various rank. In my estimation, Mamluk public architecture is informed by a very specific and identifiable language. Pursuant to findings from a wide array of public buildings throughout *al-Shām* and Michael Burgoyne's survey of monumental architecture in Jerusalem,[4] I have devised a list of its main elements, which recur with minor variations in public buildings throughout the region:

1. **Building materials**. Local limestone bricks were used, usually of very good quality, with finely chiseled exteriors.
2. **Facades**. The most prominent feature of public Mamluk compounds is arguably the extravagance of their facades. The meticulously crafted components of these structures surface time and again.

[2] This tendency is quite obvious. Most of the related studies that take up far-ranging subject matters are concerned with palaces, citadels, religious buildings, and other large-scale constructions; e.g., R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (New York, 1994).

[3] This list does not purport to be all-inclusive, but offers a representative sampling of the architectural studies on the central regions of the premodern Middle East: M. Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (Oxford, 1924); K. A. C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt, Ayyubid and Early Bahri Period* (Oxford, 1959); D. Hill and O. Grabar, *Islamic Architecture and its Decoration, A. D. 800–1500* (London, 1964); J. D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture* (Milan, 1975), 76–88; E. Kühnel, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, trans. K. Watson (London, 1966), 113–125; M. Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypen und Syrien* (Glükstadt, 1992); G. Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World* (London, 1987); C. F. Mitchell and G. A. Mitchell, *Brickwork and Masonry* (London, 1908); J. Raby (ed.), *The Art of Syria and the Jazira 1100–1250, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art,* vol. I (Oxford, 1985); F. Raggete, *Architecture in Lebanon, The Lebanese House During the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Beirut, 1974); and M. M. Sadek, *Die Mamlukische Architecture der Stadt Gaza* (Berlin, 1991).

[4] Burgoyne's work exemplifies my above-mentioned critique, as his survey of public architecture is ambitiously titled "Mamluk Jerusalem, an Architectural Survey," even though it lacks any vernacular buildings; M. H. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem, an Architectural Survey* (London, 1987). However, it bears noting that these traits far exceed Mamluk Jerusalem and may be found throughout *al-Shām* and, for that matter, the entire Mamluk Sultanate. See, for example, D. Beherens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (Leiden, 1969); D. Behrens-Abousief, *Cairo of the Mamluks. A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London, New York, 2007); and H. Salam-Leibich, H. *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

3. **Monumental entrances**. Disproportionately large doors, clearly lacking any functional rational, are set within gate structures. The upper part of the entrance is built in the shape of a conch. Beneath this ornamentation, there is typically a graded stone stalactite known as a *muqarnas*. Lower down is an elaborate inscription that usually consists of the founder's name, the date of establishment, a verse from the Quran, and a blazon. The door itself is made of wood or iron, whereas the lintel tends to include *jogglers* – fine cut stone guilloches in two or three colors. On both sides of the door is a wide, stone-carved bench known as a *maṣtaba*, which is reserved for doorkeepers.
4. ***Ablaq***. Buildings are embellished with a combination of fine stones in different colors, which generally take the form of stripes. This element is incorporated into arches, front doors, and, less often, along the facade.
5. **Windows**. Impressive, oversized rectangular windows inform the street level of most compounds, thereby allowing pedestrians to observe the interior. The windows are covered with a unique iron grating in which all the intersections are marked with chestnut-size iron nodes.
6. **Lintels and arches**. Lintels are reinforced with a very thin to imperceptible relieving arch, most of which are designed in the pointed horseshoe style.
7. **Vaults**. Public Mamluk buildings in Syria feature a vault, either the diagonal-rib (i.e., cross vault) or barrel variety.
8. **Domes**. Domes, especially pointed ones, tend to grace tombs. Shaped as octahedrons or dodecahedrons (with twelve edges), they are supported by pendentives.
9. **Cornices** were used extensively for the purpose of mitigating the intensity of direct sunlight on architectural decorations.

As we shall see, the heavily surveyed pubic architectural language constitutes a reliable starting point for a study of the less-explored vernacular architecture.

Vernacular architecture[5] refers to structures that are built by nonarchitects. This type of architecture is driven by practical needs, typically

[5] See A. Rapoport, "Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Determinants of Form," in A. D. King (ed.), *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment* (London, 1980), 283–304; idem, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1969); and H. Fathy, *Natural Energy, Vernacular Architecture. Principles and Examples with Reference to Hot Arid Climates* (Chicago, 1986), 64–75.

eschews theoretical principles, and is lacking in aesthetic qualities. Likewise, vernacular buildings are put up in a practical manner that adheres to common sense rather than to rigid or complicated plans. The builder simply takes into account the neighbors and other lots in the vicinity and operates within the physical confines and constraints of the local environment; as little effort as possible is exhausted on altering the area's physical layout.

Compared to public or monumental architecture, the vernacular variety is much more flexible. As long as the builder heeds to local cultural-religious norms, he can basically do as he pleases. Vernacular construction is generally carried out by private citizens within the purview of their homes, streets, or neighborhoods. It is the aggregate result of the random and perpetual building activity of individuals striving to create an environment that meets their physical, cultural, and social needs. Therefore, it stands to reason that, so long as people share the same cultural attributes and social norms, their cities will "speak" a similar vernacular – architectural or otherwise – even if they are located in areas with different physical conditions.[6]

Thus, another form of architecture exists alongside the public sort, one that does not involve professional architects.[7] At the very least, vernacular building is just as important as the public variety. From a quantitative standpoint, vernacular constructions undoubtedly cover a larger share of the urban expanse than the masterpieces (and lemons) that fall under the rubric of public architecture.

Rare as it may be, research on vernacular architecture in the pre-modern Islamic world usually emphasizes house forms, with little concern for the periodization of individual building specimens. Furthermore, these studies tend to concentrate on the impact of cultural norms (e.g., building traditions), climate, and technology on the development of residential areas. Even within this genre, most of the attention is given to private palaces and mansions, whereas discussions on residential solutions for the middle and lower echelons of society are few and far in between. This bias toward the ostentatious is simply a product of the existing inventory. Whereas many of the grand edifices are still standing, most of the humble abodes have not survived the vicissitudes of time.

[6] Abu Lughod's description of residential areas in India is a case in point; see idem, "The Islamic City."

[7] For a vivid portrait of this cumulative process and its results, see Hakim, *Arabic-Islamic Cities*.

In Part B, I explore the visible and hence tangible aspects of the Mamluk city. With the objective of enhancing our knowledge of houses, other private buildings, and residential neighborhoods, Chapters 2–4 are devoted to bridging the gap between the monumental and modest. Chapter 2 presents the results of a field survey that I conducted in the Old City of Jerusalem. By dint of this survey, I managed to lay down a set of parameters and elements that characterize Mamluk vernacular architecture not only in Jerusalem, but in all of Syria. Put differently, Mamluk vernacular architecture can indeed be identified and defined. Following my analysis of Jerusalem's built environment, I compare it with that of other cities in the region. What is more, the recurring themes that turned up during my survey helped me determine whether other buildings and compounds were from the Mamluk period. Chapters 2 and 3 canvass the major elements of the Mamluk city, whereas the Chapter 4 places the spotlight on various forms of housing and other private structures. The final chapter of this section draws on these foundations to shed light on the Mamluk residential neighborhood.

2

Reading the Built Environment

A Field Survey of Mamluk Jerusalem

Although urban vernacular architecture comprised the majority of the Mamluk city's built environment, scholars have yet to address this topic in a direct manner. This lacuna served as the impetus behind the present study on Mamluk vernacular buildings. Jerusalem was chosen as the foci of my field work because of its rich collection of well-documented buildings from the Mamluk era and urban compounds that postdate the Crusader period, the city's accessibility, and the expansive corpus of relevant textual sources. The survey's objective was to identify the vernacular building language of the Mamluk state. It bears noting that I was not interested in gaining access to and exploring the private parts of houses or the internal organization of residential units. Instead, I primarily sought to grasp the basic order of the urban milieu. Upon completing the field work in Jerusalem, the survey results were corroborated with data from other cities in the region, mainly Safad, Tripoli, and Acre.[1] In the next sections, I expound on the preliminary work and the basic premises that underpinned this survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND BASIC PREMISES

A chronological outline of the preliminary research, basic premises, and various stages of the survey, as well as the basic premises of my overall study on the Mamluk vernacular architecture in Jerusalem, follows:

[1] I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Eliezer Stern, the Israeli Antiquity Authority's chief archeologist of Acre, and Mr. Emanuel Damti, the Israeli Antiquity Authority's chief archeologist of Safad for sharing their vast knowledge of "their" respective cities with me. I would also like to thank Ms. Simone Rosencrantz for conducting a photographical survey of Mamluk sites in Tripoli on my behalf.

1. Conducted a study of urban landscapes in pre-Mamluk periods. My research naturally included the relevant material findings of the abundant literature on archaeology and architecture in Jerusalem.[2]
2. Conducted a study of Mamluk public architecture, with a special emphasis on external features.
3. Availed myself of identified and dated Mamluk public buildings, which served as anchors and starting points for the survey of vernacular structures.
4. Demarcated an area approximately 60–80 m wide, adjacent to the Ḥaram al-Sharīf's western and northern walls. This expanse was largely empty before the Mamluks assumed control of Jerusalem and was built up during the Mamluk period. My point of departure is that any element that surfaced in this area and could be established as pre-modern architecture was in all likelihood from the Mamluk period. Consequently, this expanse constituted the Archimedean point of the entire survey.
5. The architectonic transformation between the Crusader, Ayyūbid, and Mamluk periods was diffuse (i.e., not abrupt). In the absence of a clear marker of Mamluk architecture, I thus sought to examine the stratigraphic relations between the various parts of an expanse, once the accurate date of origin of at least one structure had been determined.
6. The typical Mamluk vernacular style persisted into the Ottoman era. Therefore, it is conceivable to find Mamluk vernacular attributes in post-Mamluk buildings.
7. *Methodology of the actual survey*: The first phase of the survey consisted of an exhaustive study of the documented Mamluk compounds' external characteristics. Thereafter, the survey was extended to adjacent unidentified buildings in an effort to establish their dating vis-à-vis the documented buildings. The analysis of the "Mamluk area" yielded a set of indicators (markers) of vernacular architecture that were subsequently utilized throughout the Old City of Jerusalem. Over the course of the entire survey, I never identified an area or site as Mamluk solely on the basis of a few indicators. Instead, the immediate vicinity was always scanned for identified

[2] There is an abundance of pertinent material. For example, Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*; D. Bahat, *The Topography and Toponymy of Jerusalem during the Crusader Period*, Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (unpublished, 1999); and *Levant*, *British School of Archaeology* publications.

buildings or established datings that could serve as anchors for the establishment of precise datings of vernacular constructions.[3]

ELEMENTS OF MAMLUK VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Over the course of the survey, I discovered that several elements were recurring themes in the Mamluk vernacular architecture. These are described in the following sections.

Vaults

Vaults are a common feature on the streets of Jerusalem's Old City and in many other Middle Eastern cities. These structures filled two primary needs: first, they were built over main thoroughfares to protect pedestrians from the sun and rain. Second, vaulted alleys, known as *sābāt*,[4] served as platforms that enabled individuals to enlarge their homes, usually into the part of the street running alongside it or to add residential units on top of the structure. The field survey identified two principal types of vaults:

1. **Decorated or public vaults** are a prevalent characteristic of monumental Mamluk buildings. Elements such as decorations on the vault's cantilevers,[5] ornate stone medallions and the use of choice limestone (e.g., *mizzi ahmar* and *mizzi yahudi*[6]) indicate that the builder was a person of means. These vaults are either of the barrel or diagonal-rib variety and tend to be larger than the vaults in private buildings. The most prominent feature of the Mamluk decorative vault is the double-arched *voussoir* (see Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). Two main types of endings were identified on the decorated vault:

[3] I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Adrian J. Boas. Prof. Boas' suggestions regarding the conduct of this survey, especially with respect to the complexity of identifying building components within a multilayered urban context, contributed immensely to this work.

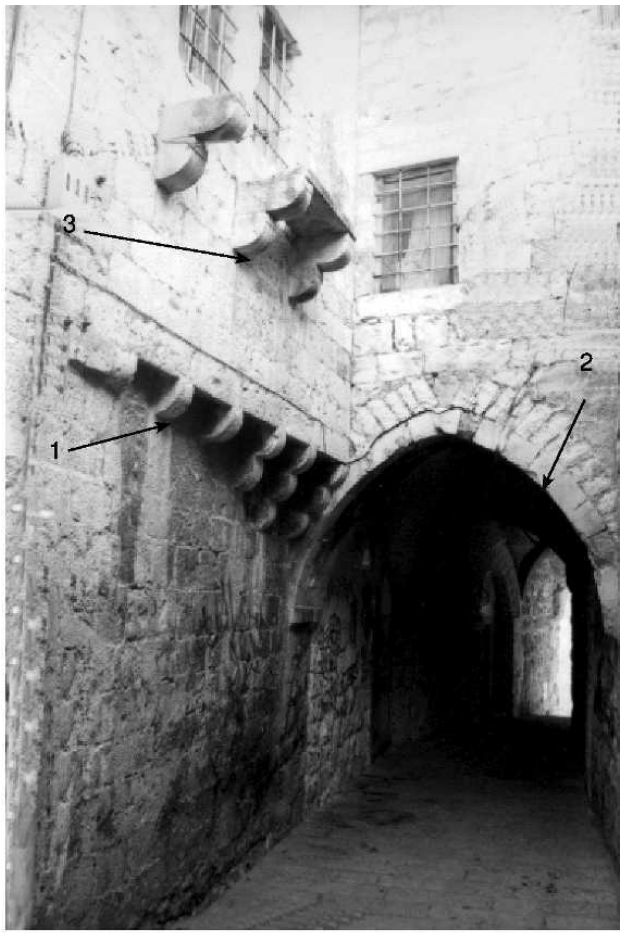
[4] The *sābāt* literally means a vaulted passage, vaulted alley, or vault. See A. Kazimiriski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français* I (Paris, 1860), 1044.

[5] A cantilever is a beam that supports those parts of a building that are under extra stress or are particularly heavy, such as overhanging structures without external bracing.

[6] These are the standard local terms for high-quality red and gold Jerusalem limestone, respectively. Local masons deemed these stones to be the best and most durable building material. Cut from dolomite, local variations of *mizzi ahmar* and *mizzi yahudi* are prevalent throughout the region.

FIGURE 2.1. A vault along ṭarīq al-Wād, Old City in Jerusalem

a. **The decorated round spring stone** is typical of vaults that are associated with Mamluk monumental buildings. This architectural style/fashion was a mainstay of the empire's vernacular architecture, and it was adopted by many private builders in Jerusalem and throughout *al-Shām*. The spring stone is purely aesthetic, serving no functional need whatsoever.



1. A Round ending of a springing stone
2. A Double arched vault
3. Residue of a porch (notice the round ending!)

FIGURE 2.2. A vault along ṭarīq Shaykh Rehyān, Old City in Jerusalem

b. **The right-angle spring stone**[7] turns up in both monumental and vernacular buildings.

The decorative vault is a significant indicator of Mamluk monumental architecture that was replicated in the era's vernacular buildings as

[7] The spring stone is the first stone and serves as the point or place where the curve of an arch or vault begins.

FIGURE 2.3. A vault near Bāb al-Asbāṭ, Old City in Jerusalem

well. However, there were differences between the ways it was used in each of these contexts. To begin, the magnitude of the vault and its architectural quality were much greater in monumental buildings. In addition, whereas the vernacular vault catered to the practical needs of the area's residents (and probably builders), the principal purpose of the monumental version was decorative. However, in many instances, it was also meant to provide shade for pedestrians.

FIGURE 2.4. Windows, along ṭarīq al-Wād, Old City in Jerusalem

2. **The "private" double-arched vault** was the most prevalent of its kind in the streets and alleys of Mamluk Jerusalem. This structure is highly functional and completely unadorned. The two principal types are distinguished by their conjoining point with the underlying wall:

a. **Right-angled spring stones,** which resemble those found in decorated public vaults.
b. **Smooth vaults without cantilevers**. The point of contact between this sort and the wall is merely a subtle unimpeded line.

The vernacular Mamluk double-arched vault varies in length, but rarely exceeds 15 m. As opposed to the clear ornamental function of the public vault, it invariably served as a platform for residential units. In fact, Mamluk urbanites commonly sought to expand their private domains. Akbar ties this phenomenon to the Islamic legal concept of *finā*,[8] which pertains to the extension of private rights into the public space adjacent to one's house. This all too mundane function explains the prevalence of this architectural element in Jerusalem. There are also several cases of single-arched vaults that have been dated to the Mamluk period. This, then, bolsters the evidence of the diversity of Mamluk vernacular architecture.

The establishment of relatively accurate dates for vault specimens also facilitated the research of residential entrances, windows, and other variables that were found in these structures.

Double Relieving Arch

This essential element reinforces various structures, such as doorways, vaults, and windows. The double relieving arch turns up in monumental Mamluk architecture and is also commonplace in vernacular buildings. In numerous instances, the relieving arch offered the first hint that I had come across an example of Mamluk vernacular architecture, but it can also be found in pre-Mamluk buildings. In a field survey conducted in Acre, I found double arches in buildings that were undoubtedly from the Crusader period, and it also surfaced in other Crusader structures throughout the region.[9] However, in Jerusalem, the double relieving arch has not been discovered on any pre-Mamluk constructions. In any event, the capriciousness of this arch constitutes yet another reason why the identification and dating of vernacular architecture demands due caution.

Windows

Several types of windows were discovered over the course of my field work. To begin, there is a clear distinction between public and vernacular

[8] J. Akbar, *Crisis in the Built Environment. The Case of the Muslim City* (New York, 1988), 107–112.

[9] The Mirabell Castle boasts a handful of fine examples of double arches; for a picture of these twelfth-century arches, see H. Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), 39.

widows. Whereas public buildings were furnished with large rectangular windows that face the streets and are usually located on the ground floor, the smaller vernacular windows were designed to conceal the inner parts of the house from pedestrians. In other words, the "architects" of monumental buildings sought to provide a maximal view of the compound, so that onlookers could appreciate their grandeur and contribution to the city. Conversely, the desire for privacy seems to have been the key factor behind the design of private residential windows. In consequence, and regardless of their style or magnitude, few vernacular windows are on the street level.

The survey yielded two main types of vernacular windows:

1. **The single, twin, or triple rectangular window** usually graces residential vaults (those built as a platform for additional construction). The average window measures 100 × 60 cm and is accompanied by a lintel that reinforces the upper part of the aperture (see Figures 2.3, 2.4). It is not uncommon for the lintel to assume the shape of a windowsill. Moreover, there is usually a relieving arch above the lintel. The builders usually tried to camouflage this arch as much as possible. In monumental buildings, the arch is often reduced to a veritable slit.[10] The understated arch thus constitutes a fine example of how vernacular architecture mimics the monumental style.
2. **The simple square or rectangular window** is generally found in the less conspicuous parts of the house – the rear and side walls. There are many versions of this unadorned opening, but we can point to two dominant styles:
   a. **Square or rectangular window**. This refers to a single window or a series of unconnected units. The size of a rib rarely exceeds 50 cm, and it is rather common for variants of the same theme to grace a single wall (see Figure 2.4).
   b. **Narrow elongated window**. This is an imitation of a style that crops up in monumental buildings. Although its dimensions vary, the average window is 25 cm long and between 5 and 15 cm wide. This rectangular element frequently serves as an ornament that is perched over the aforementioned twin window (see Figure 2.5).

[10] For example, see the window arches of Jerusalem's Madarsa al-Kilaniyya; Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 328.

FIGURE 2.5. Windows along ṭarīq Bāb al-Asbāṭ, Old City in Jerusalem

Air vents positioned above the window frames are a recurring theme in Jerusalem Mamluk architecture. Although the level of ornamentation varied, this element appears to have played a key role in ventilating homes, especially during the cold winter when residents turned to coal stoves for heating. I identified three standard styles:

1. **Rosette shaped vent** – a decorated vent 15 to 20 cm in diameter.
2. **Round air vent** – closely resembles the rosette style, but is less refined.
3. **Simple air vent** – an unadorned vent that is usually square.

Arches over windows (see Figure 2.3) comprised three predominant types of relieving arches (also known as discharging arches), which were used to reinforce windows:

1. The elaborately decorated relieving arch, in which the functional arch is upgraded into a decorative element.
2. Decorated relieving arch – a crude version of the first.
3. The simple relieving arch practically takes the shape of a linear line, not more than 2 cm wide (see Figure 2.4).

Doorways

At times, identifying doorways from the Mamluk period is particularly challenging because the extant gate or doorway is often a later renovation of an original Mamluk structure. With this in mind, we can point to three main types:

1. **Doorways incorporating Mamluk stylistic motifs** are relatively more ornate than the original model. Although constructed on a smaller scale, they are reminiscent of doorways found in monumental Mamluk buildings (see Figure 2.6).
2. **The arched doorway with arched canopy** turns up in shops, houses, and the entrance to courtyards. This style is likely to incorporate decorative stones (see Figure 2.7).
3. **Amorphous doorway**. Although most of these entrances are rectangular, the diverse shape, size, and style of this sort of doorway preclude a single precise definition (see Figure 2.8).

Chamfer (*Shaṭḥ*)

The *shaṭḥ* or chamfer is a decorative element that is formed by cutting a sharp angle (usually 45 degrees) between two conjoining walls (see Figure 2.9). In Jerusalem, the upper part of this surface generally assumes the form of the Egyptian-style hoods that inhabit the upper part of stone stalactites (*muqarnas*).[11] The chamfer derives from Mamluk monumental architecture and has no functional purpose. It repeatedly turns up on the corners of houses and vaults in many different parts of the city. At times, the *shaṭḥ* is conspicuous and embellished; at other times it is barely visible

[11] Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 98.

FIGURE 2.6. Vernacular building near al-Madarsa al-Ḥanbaliyya, Old City in Jerusalem

and superfluous. This element first emerged during the Mamluk era, but is found in later periods as well.

Double Relieving Arch

This essential element reinforces various structures, such as doorways, vaults, and windows. The double relieving arch turns up in monumental Mamluk architecture and is also commonplace in vernacular buildings (see Figure 2.10). In numerous instances, the relieving arch offered the first hint that I had come across an example of Mamluk vernacular architecture, but it can also be found in pre-Mamluk buildings. In a field survey conducted

FIGURE 2.7. Doorway in Ribāṭ al-Kurt, Old City in Jerusalem

in Acre, I found double arches in buildings that were undoubtedly from the Crusader period, and it also surfaced in other Crusader structures throughout the region.[12] However, in Jerusalem, the double relieving arch has not been discovered on any pre-Mamluk constructions. In any event, the capriciousness of this arch constitutes yet another reason why the

[12] As demonstrated at the Mirabell Castle; see H. Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), 39.

FIGURE 2.8. Doorway within a Mamluk vault, Old City in Jerusalem

identification and dating of vernacular architecture demands due caution. Consequently, the existence of a double relieving arch must be corroborated with other elements before dating a building to the Mamluk era.

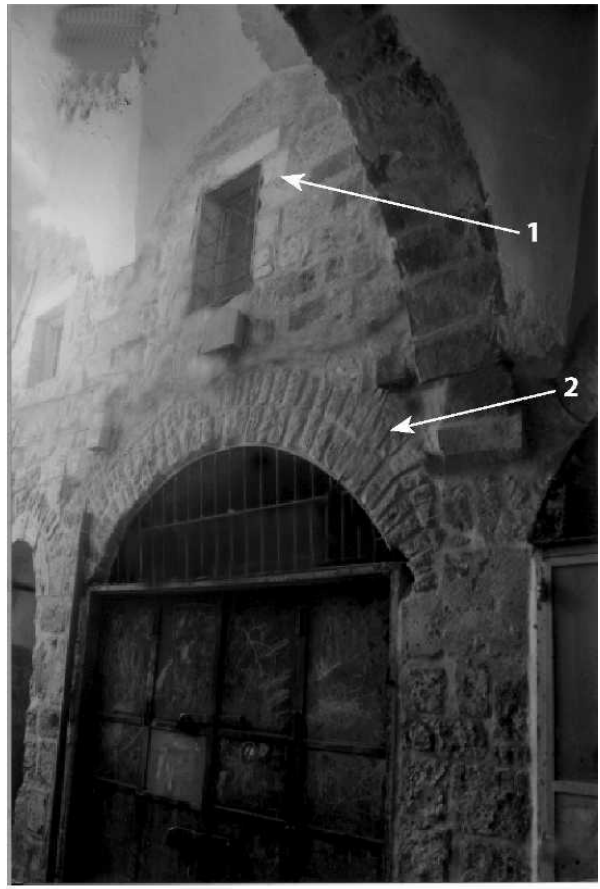
External Components and Accessories

1. **Porches.** Residential porches are informed by a series of two to four cantilevers supporting a stone platform over six feet long. In many cases, the porch is fenced in with a stone parapet. It stands to reason that the existing parapets are later renovations from the Ottoman period. The receding round base of the porch (see Figure 2.11) is the same aesthetic style that was used to round off vaults, doorways, and arches.
2. **External lattice.** Known regionally as the *mashrabiyya* or *kishk*, this window screen also graces monumental Mamluk architecture. This element was usually made of wood and attached to windows facing the street.
3. **Round stone cantilever.** This sort of external appurtenance was usually introduced after the building was already completed. The

1. Chamfer (notice the triangle shaped ending on its upper part!)
2. Round ending

FIGURE 2.9. Chamfer at a vault ending, Old City in Jerusalem

round stone cantilever comes in many shapes and sizes and is widespread in the vernacular architectural language. On account of this ornamentation's wide circulation, it appears as though quite a few builders deemed them to be extremely aesthetic. Several examples of this element are documented in Figures 2.2 and 2.3.



1. Double relieving arch
2. Rectangular window within the vault

FIGURE 2.10. Doorway within a relieving arch, Old City in Jerusalem

IMITATION OF MONUMENTAL MAMLUK MOTIFS

As noted, public Mamluk architecture served as a frame of reference for and a paradigm of styles, motifs, and techniques for private and/or vernacular architecture. Aside from a builder imitating these styles, extant Mamluk elements were occasionally removed from one building and incorporated into another. The three monumental elements that can be found in private buildings as well are:

FIGURE 2.11. Porch, Old City in Jerusalem

1. **Facade and doorway**. The expansive Mamluk façade, in which the actual door is appreciably smaller than the entrance area, has been found in private houses throughout the Old City, albeit on a smaller scale than in monumental buildings. A case in point is the house in Figure 2.6, whose doorway is an accurate replica of a Mamluk institution known as *Ribāṭ al-Nissā'*. Although formerly a Crusader compound, the photographed building was revamped during the Mamluk period. As part of these renovations, a Mamluk façade was installed, thereby "converting" it to the contemporaneous style (also see Figure 2.13).

FIGURE 2.12. Vault along ṭarīq al-Mawlawiyya, Old City in Jerusalem

2. ***Ablaq*** is a distinctive Mamluk style in which stones of different colors (usually white, red, and black) are interspersed, often as horizontal lines, within the same wall.[13] This motif festoons several luxurious private homes in Jerusalem (see Figure 2.12).
3. **Ornamentation**. As noted, Jerusalem's vernacular builders were inclined to absorb and borrow motifs from monumental Mamluk architecture. Figure 2.7 exhibits the use of dogteeth on a formidable,

[13] Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 90–100.

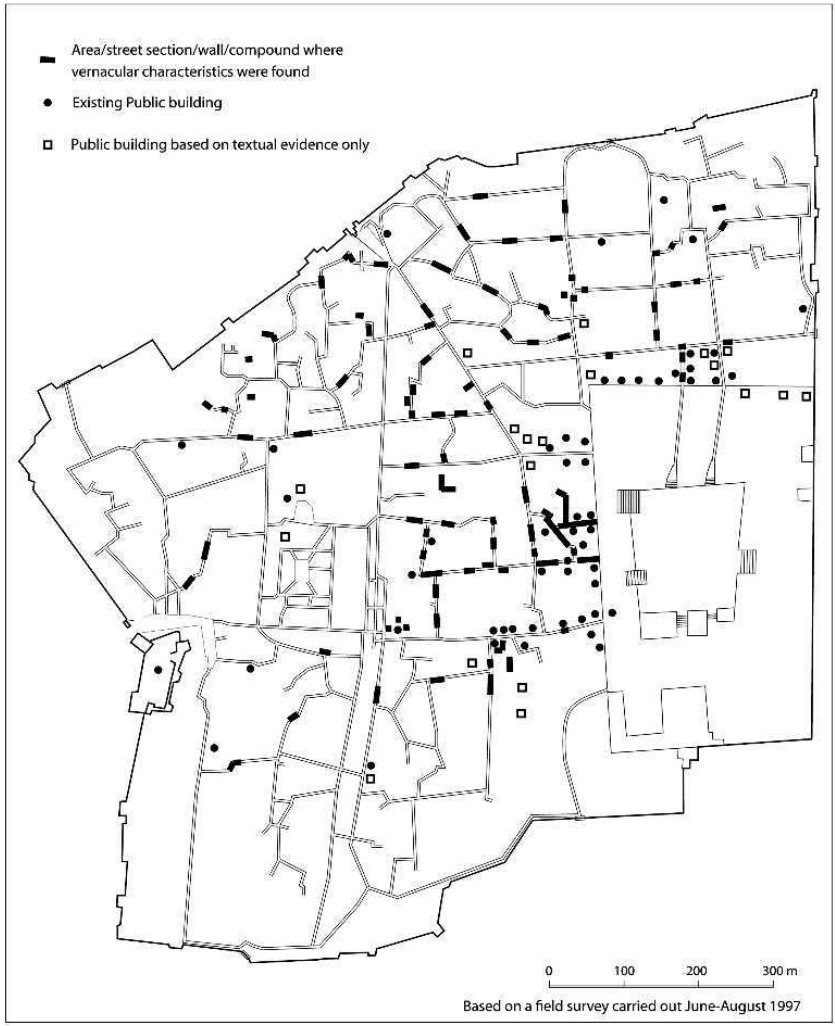
1. A wall decorated in Ablaq fashion
2. Muqarnas style decoration

FIGURE 2.13. House façade along ṭarīq al-Wād, Old City in Jerusalem

yet far from monumental, structure. In all likelihood, the builder drew inspiration from the assortment of public buildings that featured this design.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIELD SURVEY

The data collected in this survey suggest that it is indeed possible to examine multilayered historical cities on the microlevel. In the case at hand, I managed to extricate a hoard of architectural and stylistic indicators that, in toto, enabled me to reveal and decipher an inclusive regional urban vernacular language and to leverage these elements into a better understanding of the built environment of Jerusalem and, indeed, all of *al-Shām* during the Mamluk era. This innovation attests to the viability of bottom-up field studies, rather than the commonplace top-down approach. That said, there are several obvious reservations. First, the urban landscape is constantly being shaped and altered by its inhabitants, so that the final state of a building stems from myriad temporal and spatial variables. Second, whereas historical classifications tend to be grounded



MAP 2.1. Mamluk Jerusalem – Layout of public buildings and vernacular architecture

on political events, the same cannot be said for architectural styles. In a multilayered city such as Jerusalem, architectural trends and styles appear to outlive ruling dynasties and transcend historical periodization, thereby hindering the scholar's ability to determine the preferences and hallmarks of the society or era in question. Be that as it may, Map 2.1 of Mamluk Jerusalem marks the location of the city's vernacular and public

architecture. In addition, Map 2.1 highlights parts of the Old City where elements of Mamluk architecture can still be found. This does not imply that all the structures in those areas should be dated to that period; it merely indicates that urban residues containing Mamluk building characteristics were discovered in those areas.

Map 2.1 shows that elements of Mamluk vernacular architecture turn up in different parts of the city, in different neighborhoods and communities.[14] This suggests that during the Mamluk period a homogenous architectonic language was "in vogue" throughout the entire city. Put differently, the style that a builder chose did not rest entirely on creed or ethnic affiliation. Despite the constraints of manifold variables, a local vernacular language emerged that contributed immensely to the homogeneity of Jerusalem's urban landscape.

Against this backdrop, the question that begs asking is whether the results from the survey of Mamluk Jerusalem can be projected onto a larger scale to the other cities of *al-Shām*. In other words, can a more general trend be inferred from the findings? The survey of Ṣafad produced very little substantial data because only a select few of the town's relics can be positively dated to the Mamluk period. As a result, it would be futile to conduct a comparative analysis of the city's vernacular architecture with the findings from Jerusalem. The city of Tripoli, on the other hand, boasts a plethora of Mamluk-era buildings. However, as an Israeli citizen, I am prohibited from entering Lebanon. In consequence, I was forced to adopt a different approach to harvest Tripoli's bountiful crop of data.

In 1954, UNESCO commissioned a survey of the urban landscape and architecture of Lebanon. The study's findings included the following description of the Old City of Tripoli:

> Travellers and scientists who have visited Tripoli have remarked on the peculiarly oriental fascination of its narrow streets teeming with life, of its historic buildings set among houses and shops in an amazing tangle of arcades, vaults, projections, domes and minarets . . . all the buildings and the bazaars in the old city form a single unit, the several parts of which have a vital link with one another. The architecture of the houses and public buildings is the simple, natural reflection of this unit's charter.[15]

This general portrait ignores the question of chronology and certainly does not enable us to distinguish between the city's different periods. In fact, the

[14] For an analysis of the social-ethnic composition of residential areas, see Chapter 4.

[15] P. Collart et al., *Lebanon, Suggestions for the Plan of Tripoli and for the Surroundings of the Baalbek Acropolis*; Report of the UNESCO Mission of 1953, Museum and Monuments 6 (Paris, 1954).

overall topic of the UNESCO survey was the urban landscape and architectural styles in present-day Lebanon, rather than the historical development of its cities. In other words, it is primarily interested in the final outcome of various historical trends. The document thus repeatedly refers to the various building characteristics that have combined to form the shared urban landscape of each of Lebanon's cities. Like Jerusalem, Tripoli abounds in vaults, arches, stones, and meandering side streets and is informed by the segregation of residential and public areas.

To penetrate beyond the UNESCO survey's general description, I had to get as close as possible to the Mamluk architecture itself. With this objective in mind, I scrutinized a comprehensive photographic survey of Tripoli, with an emphasis on the documented Mamluk monuments and adjacent areas. In so doing, I revealed some of the same elements that were found in Jerusalem, such as the double-arched vault, similar relieving arches, entrance ways, chamfers, and cantilevers. These results are admittedly incomplete, and a comprehensive survey would surely shed further light on Mamluk Tripoli. Nevertheless, the results of the Tripoli survey produced tentatively qualitative (if not quantitative) confirmations of the validity and relevance of this approach.

The use of the same methods, building styles, and architectural elements in Mamluk Jerusalem and Tripoli clearly indicates that, in spite of unique local developments and stylistic variations, the cities of *al-Shām* shared a vernacular architecture style. The existence of a homogenous architectural language throughout the region significantly bolsters the argument that local materials, technologies, and weather conditions had a profound impact on the urban landscape. What is more, it demonstrates that architectural preferences cannot be exclusively attributed to religious demands or cultural constraints. The fact that people with different social, religious, and cultural backgrounds used the same construction techniques and preferred the same motifs surely casts doubt on the claim that Islamic religious codes were the predominant factor behind the development of the urban Mamluk landscape.

3

Houses and Residential Solutions in the Cities of *al-Shām*

> And as for the buildings in Jerusalem, they are of the finest style and made with perfection. They are all made of white stones with vaulted roofs.[1]

In this epigram, Mujīr al-Dīn offers a concise yet decidedly misleading account of the common building style in his hometown of Jerusalem. Surely not all the city's residents could have afforded to build their homes in "the finest style" because there is no evidence that Jerusalem was an extraordinarily prosperous city during this time. Instead, the quotation reveals more about Mujīr al-Dīn – a local patriot – than the actual "facts on the ground." The dubious objectivity and objectives of historical documents are but one of the many methodological problems that researchers of erstwhile house forms and styles must overcome, and these issues will be addressed in throughout this book. However, for the time being, we will explore the symbolic and social meanings of houses and their relevancy to the themes in this volume.

More specifically, in this chapter, I break away from existing views, according to which the region's dwellings are by and large a reflection and outcome of Islamic codes. I demonstrate that the residential unit in Mamluk cities derived from many variables, such as local construction materials, the climate, building traditions, and private considerations or restraints. Using the data harvested in my vernacular survey, I go beyond the written text and present various types of urban houses and residential solutions in *al-Shām*. This analysis concludes with a nuanced disquisition

[1] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 60–61.

on the typical Syrian house (*dār*). In the process, I demonstrate that not only do most of this structure's elements predate the advent of Islam, but many of its features obstruct the very religious norms that it was ostensibly designed to uphold.

The house is an elementary and indispensable part of most human settlements. In urban communities, clusters of houses form neighborhoods that, in turn, form the matrix of entire cities. Consequently, a scholar would be hard-pressed to gain insight about past societies from the landscape of historical cities without understanding the role of the domicile within the greater urban context.

Pierre Bourdieu considers the house a "structuring structure."[2] In other words, it is both the medium and outcome of social practices. A dwelling is erected for the sake of meeting its residents' physical and social needs. At the same time, its structure serves as a mechanism of acculturation. For instance, the Kabyle house (one of Bourdieu's initial forays into the dialectics of culture and space) was fashioned in accordance to a highly specific gendered spatiality, which taught the building's adolescent inhabitants the relative roles that men and women were expected to fill within their society.[3] In this respect, the residential unit serves as a multilayered manifestation of culture. Drawing once again on Ann Swidler's metaphor of culture as a toolkit, the very choices individuals make, or refrain from making, when building and structuring their homes are undoubtedly a product of their cultural background.[4] For this same reason, the house is also one of the most elaborate and revealing symbols of the self,[5] representing as it does the builder's morals, ideals, needs, social outlook, and conduct. Conversely, the domicile is also a by-product of collective values and norms.

Empirical studies have shown that individuals belonging to loosely connected groups are more likely to design their homes in a unique and personalized fashion,[6] whereas members of tight-knit groups (usually of a more traditional nature) tend to be less concerned with the presentability or grandeur of their abode. Put differently, houses that belong to individuals who are well-established within their peer group tend to be less

[2] P. Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), 89.
[3] Ibid., 45–69.
[4] Swidler, "Culture in Action."
[5] C. Cooper, "The House as a Symbol of the Self," in J. Lang, C. Burnette, W. Moleski, and D. Vachon (eds.), *Designing for Human Behaviour* (Stroudsburg, 1974), 130–146.
[6] G. Pratt, "The House as an Expression of the Social World," in J. S. Duncan (ed.), *Housing and Identity* (New York, 1982), 135–180.

self-expressive.[7] This does not imply that these people refrain from building impressive houses, but rather that they are more inclined to adopt conventional architectural tastes. This might explain, at least to some extent, both the extravagance and similarities of urban Mamluk residences because one of the builder's chief purposes was to publicly convey the owner's standing.

In light of this situation, domestic space abounds with meaning and should be viewed as one of the most important sociocultural mechanisms. That said, architectural choices do not stem entirely from the individual's cultural background, ideals, and norms. Other major factors include climate, physical layout, availability of building material, technology, economic and social status, race, gender, and religion.[8] At times, rather mundane matters, which tend to be independent of any sociocultural forces, also come into the equation.[9] Surely, the builder's financial situation dictates the quality and type of building materials. In any event, it would be a critical error to put too much weight on the impact of either cultural factors or physical conditions on the house's attributes because each set of variables plays a significant role.

As such, a wide range of factors must be taken into account to fully comprehend the house as a manifestation of its builder. To argue that residential architecture only serves the owner's immediate needs, which stem from reciprocal relations to the surrounding area, is to ignore the bigger picture. In contrast, underestimating the sociocultural realm and its influence on the final outcome would also undermine our efforts to grasp this complex reality. As we shall soon see, the majority of studies on houses in the Islamic Middle East overstate the sway of culture.

To substantiate this statement, I would like to review the various descriptions of the courtyard house type given in previous scholarly debates with the objective of debunking the argument that Islamic norms constitute the primary reason behind the abundance of courtyard residences in Middle Eastern cities.

Like any other product of human endeavor, the house is a cultural and social artefact. As such, it may be considered a nonverbal document that

[7] Ibid. For more on the impact of social networks on the exterior architectural elements of the house, see J. S. Duncan and N. G. Duncan, "Housing as Representation of Self and the Structure of Social Networks," in G. T. Moore and R. G. Golledge (eds.), *Environmental Knowing, Theories, Research, and Methods* (Stroudsburg, 1976), 247–253.

[8] K. S. Bailey, "Houses and Housing," in P. N. Stearns (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Social History* (New York, London, 1994), 331–332.

[9] Rapoport, *House Form*.

sheds light on the agents and agencies responsible for its construction. The first scholar to broach this topic was arguably George Marçais, who avers that the traditional courtyard house, particularly its introverted style, exemplifies Islamic moral values and needs:

> It is well adapted to the patriarchal view of the family and creates for it an enclosed sphere; it conforms easily with the element of secrecy dear to the private life of the Muslim, and this idea is reflected in the architectural arrangement both in elevation and in plan.[10]

In the face of such rampant generalization, it is worth remembering that the advent of the courtyard house predates the advent of Islam by a few thousand years.[11] Remains of courtyard houses dating from as far back as 3000 BCE have been excavated throughout the Middle East and along the entire Mediterranean basin.[12] These ancient communities availed themselves of this style in order to cope with weather conditions and meet the cultural demands that existed in the region well before the revelation of the Quran. Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that this was the only available house form in the pre-modern Middle East for the simple reason that not all city dwellers could have afforded this type of residence. Last, but not least, other types of housing have indeed been found.

Nevertheless, the ancient roots of the courtyard house do not rule out the possibility that religious norms played a vital role in the personal choice of this house type, but they do indicate that the reasons go well beyond the mere desire to abide by Islamic law. Although the courtyard style dovetailed smoothly with the urban sociocultural needs of medieval Syria, this in itself cannot explain the prevalence of this house form or the fact that it antecedes the rise of Islamic civilization. Aside from its compatibility with the ideals and norms of Muslim society, the courtyard plan suits the region's climate. In fact, several studies have already demonstrated that the inner courtyard's primary function is to regulate microclimatic con-

[10] Ibid.

[11] Raymond, *Grande villes arabes*, 58 ff.

[12] The earliest courtyard model was discovered during an excavation at Chatal Huyuk. Radiocarbon dating has established that some of the courtyard houses were constructed as far back as 5600 BCE; see J. Mellaarat, *Çatal Hüyük* (London, 1967). For a similar ground plan, see L. Woolley, *Ur of Chaldes* (Ithaca, 1982) (revised and updated edition by P. R. S. Mooery). E. Pauty discusses the courtyard house in Egypt and *al-Shām* from the third millennium BCE to the seventh century CE; idem, *Les palais et les maisons d'époque Musulmane, au Caire* (Le Caire, 1932), 13–25. The famous exhibition of the Ishtar Gate at the Pergamon museum in Berlin boasts in its reconstruction of Babylon (third century BCE) perfectly shaped courtyard houses that were also rebuilt on site by the American Army (after having run them down in armed vehicles) following the occupation of Iraq.

ditions in semi-arid environments.[13] Put differently, the introverted plan is a practical solution for safeguarding the house against excessive sunlight, hot winds, and dust.

In broaching the climatic reasons for the development of house plans, I have no intention of understating or ignoring the effect of cultural factors on the morphology of domiciles. The introverted house, with its assorted facilities and functions hidden from the outside world, is obviously commensurate with a worldview that deems the family to be the primary and predominant social framework. It also constitutes an optimal solution for cultures that place a premium on privacy and aspire to sequester the family's women from outsiders. However, as noted, these notions were already in force throughout the extended region long before the rise of Islam in the seventh century.

What is more, there are cities with long-term Muslim majorities in which no courtyard houses have been found. According to Golvin and Formont, the Yemenite city of Thulā had no houses with inner courtyards, and many of its domiciles featured extremely wide windows facing the street.[14] Given the local climate, religious codes, and other sociocultural norms, this was probably the best solution for Thulā's populace.

In light of this, the oft-expressed position whereby the cultural demands of Islam undergird the courtyard plan's immense popularity is simplistic and misleading, especially when taking into account the fact that the cities of *al-Shām* and other Muslim lands (most notably Egypt) featured many other forms of housing. More than anything else, this view, like others that pertain to urban characteristics in the Islamic world, is a misguided preconception. The courtyard house is neither inherently Muslim nor predicated on any Islamic dictates. Instead, the inside-outside plan offers, above all, the optimal dwelling solution for the region's harsh climate. Islamic societies simply inherited this model and adapted it to suit their members' personal needs and means. In fact, stressing Islam's role as a cultural factor

[13] Y. Belkacem, "Bioclimatic Patterns and Human Aspects of Urban Form in the Islamic Cities," in I. Seragldin and S. El-Sadek (eds.), *The Arab City, Its Character and Islamic Cultural Heritage* (Riyadh, 1982), 2–12; B. Givoni, *Climate Consideration in Building and Urban Design* (New York, 1998), 343–351; G. T. Petherbridge, "Vernacular Architecture: The House and Society," in G. Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World* (London, 1987), 176–208, esp. 199–201; and J. Akbar, "Courtyard Houses: A Case Study from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia," in I. Seragldin and S. El-Sadek (eds.) *The Arab City*, 162–176.

[14] L. Golvin and M. C. Formont, *Thula, architecture et urbanisme d'une cite de haute montagne en République Arabe du Yémen*. Mémoire no. 30 (Paris, 1984).

is misleading because, under the vague heading of culture, Islamic societies possess traits that have nothing to do with religion.

Like any analysis of material findings, we are confined to the evidence at hand. In researching houses, it is imperative that scholars recognize the fact that lower class buildings are more susceptible to contingency and thus much less likely to survive the march of time than are those of the upper class. Moreover, we can assume that modest residences are underrepresented in written records and literary accounts. As a result, most of the researchable dwellings belong to wealthier strata of society. Raymond encountered this same problem during his field work in Ottoman cities,[15] and he stresses the inherent bias that informs these sorts of surveys. Moreover, this proclivity is all the more glaring in the vast disproportion between the myriad studies on public and monumental buildings, on the one hand, and the meagre amount of research on vernacular architecture and common residential dwellings, on the other.[16] Needless to say, our knowledge about private houses in general and the abodes of the less fortunate in particular is inferior to the substantial documentation of palaces and mansions. Given the dearth of evidence, we can only speculate as to the number of, say, mud and straw-brick domiciles or wooden huts in fourteenth-century Tripoli or fifteenth-century Safad. What we do know is that, as opposed to stone, materials like mud, straw, and wood were widely available in *al-Shām*, so that there may very well have been a considerable number of modest dwellings during the Mamluk dynasty that have vanished from the urban landscape. Furthermore, Mamluk-era buildings have probably endured more change and elimination than those from the Ottoman-era simply because they are older.

Against this backdrop, it is incumbent upon any researcher of the Mamluk landscape to acknowledge the unsurpassable obstacles that stand in the way of firm and definitive conclusions. With this in mind in, let us embark on a survey of the various types of residences during the Mamluk period.

PRIVATE HOUSES

The Syrian city featured but a small handful of individual or private house types during the Mamluk era. As reflected in various sources from this

[15] A. Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities*, 70–71.

[16] A case in point is the voluminous research on houses in Mamluk Cairo by J. C. Garcin et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire I: époque Mamelouke (XIII^e–XVI^e siècles)* (Paris, 1982).

period, the common term for the house was *dār*, which usually referred to a structure consisting of several parts: residential units or rooms; courtyards; and necessary amenities, like cisterns, ovens, storage chambers (*makhzān*), and toilets. Private houses were built of local stone, mainly limestone. Most ornaments, which were primarily found in luxurious residences, were made of marble (either imported or in secondary use), but there are also rare cases in which basalt was used.[17]

Over the course of the field survey, I identified the following primary morphological and architectural traits of the private Mamluk house:

- **The façade**, or the part of the house facing the street, included a single-entry gate, which was usually lower than the average person's height and no more than a meter thick. The entrance itself was a massive door (either wood or metal), which stressed the transition from the public (or semi-public) street into the private domain. Most of the houses surveyed were no more than two stories high. In those buildings with a third floor, there are usually architectural indications of post-Mamluk construction. The most obvious one is the sharp contrast between the stones used by early and later (especially Ottoman) builders. The paucity of extant three-story edifices does not necessarily mean that Syrian Mamluk houses were limited to two floors, as were their counterparts in Cairo; rather, due to the greater exposure to the elements, the top floor was more susceptible to erosion and thus demanded renovations and other changes over the years.
- **Windows and porches**. The front windows of private domiciles were relatively small, and few variations of this element turned up in the survey. For the most part, there were no windows on the street level, and the exceptions were ordinarily very small and shaded or covered with a grille. Porches were uncommon in modest private homes. The dimensions of those few that were put up were diminutive compared to the *kishk*, a popular type of balcony in Mamluk-era public buildings.
- **Roofs**. Similar to the area's rural building tradition, the roof was built in the shape of a masonry dome. Therefore, in all that concerns stone houses, Mujīr al-Dīn's description of Jerusalem was on target
- **Courtyards**. In some of the private houses, a corridor led from the gate into a private courtyard. The corridor was usually angular and included a few twists and turns. The size of the courtyards varied considerably.

[17] It is worth noting that marble is not endemic to Syria and was thus always imported. The supply of basalt was limited, so that its very use indicates a heavy financial investment.

The residential units (*bayt*, pl. *buyūt*) were built on the perimeter of the lot, and their entrances faced the courtyard. In multiple-story houses, the flight of stairs was ordinarily at the side of the courtyard. A small share of these buildings featured a central courtyard, namely, an inner expanse that was surrounded on all sides by the compound's structures. However, many other courtyard houses were aligned according to completely different models.

To this point, we have focused on the external parts of the house. The survey established the fact that the original features of the buildings' exterior were, by and large, preserved. Conversely, the internal parts stood a much greater chance of being altered due to recurrent renovations, transfer of ownership, or a change in the economic fortunes of the residents. Therefore, to enter the threshold of the residential unit and gain an understanding of its interior parts, we were compelled to rely almost entirely on written documentation.[18]

COURTYARD HOUSES

On 4 Rabīʿ II 778 (August 21, 1376), a house was purchased in the Christian neighborhood (Ḥarāt al-Nasārā) of Jerusalem.[19] The property, known as Dār ibn al-Launain, consisted of three vaulted units (*buyut*), a kitchen, and toilet facilities. The residential units surrounded a courtyard with two cisterns and fruit-bearing trees. Another vaulted room, which functioned as a storage chamber, was constructed below the courtyard. The building's entrance opened onto an alley to the east of the compound. Several courtyard houses of this type were found during the survey.

The house of one Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn was constructed on the basis of a different plan. The shaykh purchased his house on 21 Dhū al-Qaʿda 780 (March 12, 1379) for 825 dirhams.[20] Aside from the building's vaulted upper and lower levels, the deed of transaction notes that the property also included a courtyard and an external toilet unit. In this particular case, the courtyard was adjacent to the building. However, few of the houses that turned up in the field survey were arranged in this fashion.

[18] In addition, most of the Old City's private houses were inaccessible at the time of the survey, partly because the residents were reluctant to open their houses to the "gaze" of a stranger and partly due to the ongoing political strife in Jerusalem.

[19] D. P. Little, *A Catalogue of the Islamic Documents from the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem* (Beirut, 1984), 255, no. 35. I am indebted to Mr. Khader Salameh for enabling me to examine the original documents of the Mamluk *sijil* at the Ḥaram al-Sharīf's library.

[20] Little, *Catalogue*, 278, no. 39.

As already noted, the term *dār* did not refer exclusively to houses that adhered to the central courtyard plan.[21] In fact, some houses (*diyār*) had no courtyard whatsoever and opened directly into the street or alley along which they were built. Bearing the meaning of a residential house or unit, this term comes up in hundreds of Mamluk-era documents that were found at the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem. Few are the instances in which a courtyard is mentioned and, even then, it is uncertain if the record is referring to the central variety. Furthermore, the early Ottoman *sijil* documents no fewer than 228 houses in Jerusalem, only 42 of which had a courtyard (either enclosed or adjacent).[22] The urban reality that emerges from this *sijil* not only sheds light on the formative years of the Ottoman period, but on the final decades of the Mamluk era, if not more. Therefore, we may conclude that most private houses in Jerusalem did not have courtyards, but were what Raymond referred to as "atypical houses."[23]

LUXURIOUS HOUSES

Compared to the "private" dwellings just discussed, the Syrian upper class resided in extremely large houses. Accordingly, a number of private houses whose proportions, plans, and opulence far exceed those of the average domiciles in the city were discovered over the course of my field work in Jerusalem. These residences were characterized by top-grade construction material, external ornamentation, and grandiose plans. In addition, they borrowed elements and styles from Mamluk monumental architecture. For example, a palatial house with Ablaq-style outer walls and broad windows turned up above Ṭarīq al-Wad (the site of the minor cardo of Roman Jerusalem). Another domicile of this caliber turned up along one of the city's main streets (Ṭariq al-ʿAqaba), opposite Dār al-Sitt Tunshuq (literally, the house of Lady Tunshuq). To begin, the building boasts a monumental façade and entrance. Unlike the city's less ostentatious abodes, where the entrance is through a corridor, this two-story house is surrounded by a towering, single-entry gate structure that opens to a small inner court and an imposing entrance to the house itself. The upper floor is graced by sizable windows and an exquisitely decorated porch. Another stately domicile was located near al-Madarsa al-Muʿaẓẓamiyya

[21] This is corroborated by N. H. al-Khimṣī in his description of a house in Tripoli; idem, *Ta'rīkh Ṭarābulus* (Beirut, 1986), 352.

[22] Kh. Salāmeh, "Aspects of the Sijils of the Sharīʿa Court in Jerusalem," in S. Auld and R. Hillenbrand (eds.), *Ottoman Jerusalem* 1 (London, 2000), 128–132.

[23] Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities*, 87.

(roughly 50 m from the northern wall of the Ḥaram). Large ornate windows were installed on the upper floor. On the roof sat a unique porch constructed of basalt, which is not indigenous to the Jerusalem area, so that the material was probably imported from afar.

A common feature of all the houses in this category was their accessibility, as they were either close to or overlooked the Mamluk city's main thoroughfares. This shared trait implies that there was a connection between economic status, personal preference, and house location. Apparently, the city's affluent chose to reside in highly convenient places. Economic status was certainly a key factor in housing-related decisions because the rich were able to choose a location that better suited their needs. Although such a conclusion is based on a qualitative analysis (rather than a quantitative one), it seems as though prosperity was indeed an important factor when selecting the location of one's home. Although this observation might appear to be self-evident, it need not be taken lightly on account of the literature's near fixation with religious or ethnic motivations for housing choices in Middle Eastern cities. The connection between wealth and location is bolstered by findings from J. C. David, who identified and classified typical house types in early Ottoman Aleppo.[24] By virtue of a comprehensive survey, David revealed a concentric hierarchy of houses around the city's center.[25] In Jerusalem, too, the closer the lot was to the center, the steeper the price, and Raymond detected similar concentric rings in other Middle Eastern cities during the Ottoman period.[26] Therefore, we may infer that this phenomenon was in force throughout the entire region.

PUBLIC HOUSES

I use the term "public houses" for lack of a better alternative. In contemporary geographical jargon, this term usually refers to government housing for the underprivileged. However, in Mamluk Syrian cities, it appears as though this type of residence was also initiated by the private sector. In earlier works, I dubbed this category "collective housing," but, in retrospect, this term is less fitting because it is liable to be mistaken for a

[24] J. C. David, "Alep, déradation et tentatives actuelles de rédaptation des structures urbaines traditionnelles," *BEO* 28 (1978): 19–50.
[25] Ibid., map no. 12.
[26] Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities*, 58–70.

communal arrangement or to imply social connections that simply never existed.[27]

The Syrian city featured at least three types of public houses. However, the literary and morphological data on this category in *al-Shām* are somewhat sporadic compared to private houses. As a result, I drew on the cornucopia of material on urban life in Egypt during the Mamluk era.

THE *KHĀN* AS A DWELLING COMPOUND

The term *khān* is generally used to describe a closed compound with one main entrance through a vaulted alley. The inner part of the *khān* consists of a central courtyard, which is enclosed by several stories of residential units and storage chambers. Traditionally, the *khān* served as the venue where customs were levied on products and produce entering the city and where itinerant merchants would lodge and store their goods. In consequence, the term is occasionally translated as "caravansary."[28] However, the *khān* also housed people going through a transition phase (such as new immigrants) or individuals who lived a peripatetic lifestyle (e.g., soldiers).

A quintessential example of this institution was Khān Banū Saʿd, which was located outside the wall of Jerusalem, probably next to the city's northwestern corner.[29] Mujīr al-Dīn conveys that a certain shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Fallaḥ al-Saʿdī was among the residents of Khān Banū Saʿd,[30] but this place seems to be a transitional post for the Banū Saʿd family. During the Mamluk period, there was indeed a neighborhood called al-Saʿadiyya in the northeastern part of Jerusalem, well within the city's walls.[31] Kamil Jamil Al-ʿAsalī dates (albeit without explicitly revealing his sources) the arrival of the Saʿd family, or perhaps tribe, to Jerusalem back to the Ayyubid period.[32] They initially settled on the city's outskirts, in the same *khān*, which at some point was also named after them. Members of this group were gradually absorbed into Jerusalem proper

[27] N. Luz, "Urban Residential Houses in Mamluk Syria: Forms, Characteristics and the Impact of Socio-Cultural Forces," in M. Winter and A. Levanoni (eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society* (Leiden, Boston, 2004), 339–355.

[28] N. Elisséeff, "Khān," *EI*^{2} 4:1010–1017. See also A. Raymond et G. Wiet, *Les Marchés du Caire, tradition annotée du texte de Maqrīzī. Texte Arabes et Études Islamique*, vol. 14 (Paris, 1979), 1–16.

[29] Mujīr al-Din, al-Uns, 2, 167.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See the map of the city's neighborhoods in A. Arnon, "The Quarter of Jerusalem in the Ottoman Period," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28 (1992): 13–14.

[32] K. J. al-ʿAsalī, *Min Atharinā fi Bayt al-Maqdis* (Amman, 1982), 96.

over the course of the Mamluk era. The Saʿds' transition from a *khān* outside the city to a neighborhood that was eventually named after them clearly attests to the assimilation process that they underwent.

In addition to the *khān*'s customary function as an inn and commercial compound, various documents suggest that some were built (or at least served) as housing units for full-time residents.[33] This hypothesis is supported by the location of certain *khāns* because a few of them were situated in residential areas, rather than in commercial or peripheral parts of town. For example, Jerusalem's Khān al-Jubaylī and Khān al-Sitt were located in the heart of the residential neighborhoods Marzubān and Khaṭṭ Bāb al-ʿAmūd, respectively.[34]

Rabʿ

At least from a morphological standpoint, the *rabʿ* resembles a modern apartment building[35] – a multistory residential unit that was constructed for rental purposes.[36] The ground floor was slated for shops and storage chambers, whereas apartments filled the upper floors. The windows of the apartments faced the street. Every floor contained several apartments, each with their own private door; all the residents shared a common staircase and street entrance. Unlike Cairo, not even a single Mamluk-era *rabʿ* has been discovered in Syria, so that all the data on these quasi-cooperatives derive from written records. For example, Ḥaram al-Sharīf documents refer to at least three: Rabʿ al-Ḥusaynī, Rabʿ ibn al-Ḥanbalī, and Rabʿ Tankiz.[37] Moreover, Raymond's survey of Cairo provides ample information about this type of building. He concludes that the residents shared no familial or formal social ties. The purpose of these buildings was to meet the demand for convenient and inexpensive housing. Most *rabʿ* residents were indeed artisans and shopkeepers of modest means who wanted to live close to their place of work but lacked the wherewithal to buy a private house. In sum, the *rabʿ* constituted an affordable solution for its residents and a commercial investment for the entrepreneur.

[33] On new perspective on *khāns* – inns along roads – as we see in Chapter 5 n. 52–53.
[34] For more on Khān al-Jubaylī, see Mujīr al-Din, al-Uns 2, 53; and for more on Khān al-Sitt, see Little, *Catalogue*, 116, no. 432.
[35] Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities*, 83–85.
[36] S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society* 4 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1983), 13–14.
[37] Little, *Catalogue*, 66, no. 86; 85, no. 226; 140, no. 547.

ḤAWSH

The *ḥawsh* resembled the *rabʿ* but was geared toward a lower economic strata. Most *ḥwash* compounds consisted of a cluster of undersized residential units around a joint courtyard, which contained an assortment of small utility rooms. A corridor connected the main entrance to a central courtyard. The units were made out of inferior material, and the building standards were usually low. In most instances, the *ḥawsh* was larger than the private house. Whereas the *dār* belonged to its inhabitants, the *ḥawsh* was owned by a landlord who leased it out. This type of residence may still be found in the historical parts of Syrian cities. Although the type of inhabitants and ownership structure may have changed, the external physical structure has remained intact.[38]

According to the *sijil*, there was a *ḥawsh* in Jerusalem – known as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Tūrī[39] – not far from Bāb al-Asbāt (one of the Ḥaram's northern gates). One of the *sijil* documents includes an inventory list that was drawn up by the *qadi*'s assistants after the death of one of the *ḥawsh*'s residents. The document also mentions two male pilgrims, al-Sudānī and al-Turkumānī,[40] and a woman known as al-Dimashqiyya (i.e., from Damascus). Judging by their *nisbas* (name suffix) and the fact that no relatives turned up in the municipal records, one may assume that the three were merely passing through. The dates of the documents attest to the fact that they split the same compound during their stay; in other words, they shared accommodations even though they were not related. In light of this, we may surmise that the *ḥawsh* was a cheap form of housing for peripatetic members of the lower class.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESIDENTIAL UNIT

As we have seen, there were multiple house types and plans in the cities of *al-Shām*. The typical dwelling solution for the less privileged were collective residences: the *ḥawsh* or, as the case may be, the *khān*. The private house (be it some version of the courtyard house or other "atypical form") and the public *rabʿ* catered to more privileged segments of society. Last, only a minute fraction of the urban populace could have afforded an opulent house.

[38] See, for example, Y. Ben Arieh, *A City Reflected in Its Times* (Jerusalem, 1986), 360.
[39] Little, *Catalogue*, 87, no. 237; 119–120 no. 446; 138, no. 537.
[40] Ibid., 87, no 87 and 119, no. 446.

Syrian dwellings adhered to an inside-outside approach.[41] In other words, the builders availed themselves of a wide range of methods and styles to ensure maximum separation between the private and public domain. From a morphological standpoint, this divide was accomplished by a single point of ingress from the street to the house. Additionally, windows and other openings were generally located on the upper floors, whereas the ground floor was usually windowless. This type of architecture also tends to nudge all sorts of domestic activities to the inner or rear parts of the expanse.

The prevalence of the inside-outside style attests to the importance of privacy in *al-Shām*. However, it bears noting that this building style was not unique to either the region or the Muslim world because it is found in a wide range of traditional societies.[42] In fact, the desire for privacy should be viewed as a general trait of pre-modern societies. Other factors also contributed to the decision to adopt an inside-outside approach, including climate, technology, building materials, economic constraints, and personal taste.

The location in which members of different classes lived hints to an interesting phenomenon. Despite the shortage of existing samples, it appears as though luxury houses were situated in areas that enjoyed greater access to major urban thoroughfares. As noted, the argument can thus be made that location was a product of economic status. This hypothesis is corroborated by David's aforementioned survey of sixteenth-century Aleppo, where the price of land dropped the further the property was from the city center. These examples of major economic factors on residential choices attest to the fact that sociocultural inclinations are not the only determinant of housing location. In addition to well established sociocultural factors like kinship and ethnic affiliations, other considerations were taken into account by city residents when choosing location, neighborhood, and architectural style.

THE COURTYARD HOUSE AND THE "TYPICAL *DĀR*": REALITY AND MYTH

The data gleaned from the survey neither refute the existence nor minimize the scope of the courtyard house plan. However, it is evident that the courtyard was not the only available option. What is more, the findings

[41] For more on this type of architecture, see Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, 48–49.
[42] Ibid.

show that it is virtually impossible to determine the relative distribution of the courtyard house in Mamluk cities vis-à-vis other types of models because there is no way of estimating the number of houses that disappeared without trace from either the urban landscape or written record. Notwithstanding these serious problems, earlier studies were inclined to understate or completely ignore other building plans and house types. Instead, most scholars have aggressively pitched courtyard houses as prevalent examples of Islamic culture's deep impact on the development of the urban landscape.[43]

Throughout this chapter, I have emphasized the diversity of housing types in the urban societies of *al-Shām*. The existence of several housing alternatives bears witness to the fact that many variables contributed to the final contours and attributes of each and every domicile. Be that as it may, scholars have yet to formulate a clear-cut definition of the *dār* that covers the entire Islamic world or put their finger on its origins.

My research on the housing solutions in the Mamluk cities of Syria has revealed that the claim that all residential buildings were designed according to a single basic plan is completely untenable. Moreover, I have shown that the courtyard house is neither inherently Muslim nor predicated on any Islamic dictates.

In summation, this ongoing attempt to draw a direct corollary between Islamic imperative and urban architecture is unfounded. Although the house plan is undoubtedly a morphological expression of culture and central to social forces, the contours and attributes of a domicile, like culture itself, should not be attributed to any single factor. A house's space, layout, and usage are malleable and ever-changing elements, for within any society there are numerous variables that come into play when constructing a residence. What is more, every individual brings his or her own needs into the final equation. This does not mean that researchers should stop looking for sociocultural influences. However, we are best advised to jettison the surfeit of conjecture and chimeras that encumber the discourse on typical and atypical house forms in *al-Shām* and the greater Middle East.

[43] Von Grunebaum, "Structure of the Muslim City," 147–150; G. Marçais, "Dār," *EI2*, 2: 113–115.

4

The Neighborhood

Social and Spatial Expressions

The neighborhood has apparently been a fixture on the urban landscape since the city first emerged on the world stage. Lewis Mumford, a fervent advocate of the virtues of the historical city, deems the neighborhood to be an integral part of the urban sphere and a natural outcome of people and communities clustering together:

> Neighbourhoods, in some primitive, inchoate fashion exist wherever human beings congregate, in permanent family dwellings; and many of the functions of the city tend to be distributed naturally – that is, without any theoretical preoccupation or political direction – into neighbourhoods.[1]

In short, Mumford sees the neighborhood as a "fact of nature" – a spontaneous outcome of people bonding together simply due to the proximity of their dwellings. Like the house, the street, or the market, the neighborhood is an indispensable component of the city because it provides its residents with a sense of security and belonging. In his epic novel, *Awlād Ḥaritnā: Riwaya* (translated as *Children of Our Neighborhood*), the Egyptian Nobel laureate Nagib Mahfouz draws a complex and variegated picture of a typical "urban island" in Old Cairo.[2] Along with the social and spatial intimacy, Mahfouz's expanse is also informed by less desirable phenomena: violence, abuse, transgression of individual liberties and property, and other social pathologies. Notwithstanding the common ills of historical

[1] L. Mumford, "The Neighbourhood and the Neighbourhood Unit," *Town Planning Review* (1954) 24: 256–270.

[2] N. Mahfouz, *Awlād Ḥāritnā: Riwaya* (Beirut, 1986). The title has also been rendered *The Children of Gebelaawi*.

neighborhoods, modern urban planners and theorists are painstakingly seeking to recapture their sense of place, belonging, and intimacy.[3]

In addition to these documented traits, researchers are a long way from fully grasping or agreeing on the essence of the urban neighborhood, be it historical or contemporary. In this chapter, I shed light on the nature of Mamluk urban neighborhoods. I show that the term "neighborhood" as used by city dwellers is, first and foremost, a cultural-social one, whereas its spatial component is of secondary importance and emanates from its cultural disposition. More specifically, I argue that a neighborhood is primarily a socially oriented entity that happens to take up a certain space. Therefore, its boundaries are prone to both social and spatial change. I also contend that the ambiguity among scholars concerning the very essence of the neighborhood is partly due to the fact that the name by which local inhabitants refer to an area is often identical to that of, say, tax authorities. In other words, the bottom-up and top-down versions are often conflated, despite the appreciable differences between the two. Another topic broached herein is the disparities in urban mobility between various religious communities. My analysis reveals that Muslims were more inclined to move around the city than were other religious groups. With these objectives in mind, this chapter begins with an analysis of the previous studies on the region's neighborhoods. I then survey the data that were harvested from the provincial cities of *al-Shām* and present my findings.

THE SYRIAN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD: TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

The first in-depth analysis of the Syrian urban neighborhood can be found in Jean Sauvaget's studies on Damascus and Aleppo.[4] According to Sauvaget, the center of the Syrian "medieval" city – an open-ended and rather murky term for large-scale urban settlements from the time of the Umayyad period – underwent a steep decline as the urban landscape fractured into small autonomic cells (i.e., neighborhoods), which were occasionally at odds with one another. Correspondingly, each residential neighborhood developed distinct morphological features and its own economic and administrative base:

[3] The most comprehensive examination of the neighborhood's ability to cater to the residents' need for a local feel is J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961), chapter 6.

[4] Sauvaget, "Damas," 452–453; idem, Aleppo, 105–106. For a similar description and conclusions, see R. Le Tourneau, *La vie quotidienne à Fès en 1900* (Paris, 1965), 53.

Chacun de ces quartiers est comme une ville miniature, ayant sa Mosquèe, son dispositive d'adducation d'eau, son bain public, son petit bazaar (sweyqa) ou l'on trouve les denrèes et objets de première nècessitè; il a son chef responsable et sa police, jusqu'a ses fortifications (les portes) et son armèe (aḥdāth). Sa Population se recrute de prèfèrence parmi les habitants d'une même règion, ou parmi les membres d'une même confession religieuse, d'une même tribu ou d'une même famille.[5]

In other words, Sauvaget claimed that each neighborhood was practically an independent unit run by a *rā'is* or *shaykh al-ḥāra* (head of the neighborhood), who represented the local population before the municipal authorities and the sultanate. Every residential area had its own mosque, market, and bath house, and the population was homogeneous from an ethnic, religious, or family/tribal standpoint. Morphologically speaking, the neighborhood had one main entrance (sometimes consisting of a fortified gate), from which its main street flowed before breaking off into a labyrinth of smaller streets and alleys. By virtue of the physical barriers and clear borders that separated one neighborhood from the next, Sauvaget averred that there was little interface and cooperation between what were essentially detached enclaves. Furthermore, there were very strict zoning ordinances that divided the private/residential areas from public spheres. As a result, each municipal category filled it own range of functions.

Ira Lapidus's account of the Muslim city bears a strong resemblance to that of Sauvaget, but the former places a greater emphasis on sociopolitical mechanisms and organizations. In his discussion on urban administration, Lapidus addresses the physical character of neighborhoods:

The cities were divided into districts called *ḥārāt*, *maḥallāt* or *akhṭāṭ*. There were residential quarters with small local markets and perhaps workshops, especially for weaving, but characteristically isolated from the bustle of the main central bazaars. In Damascus and Aleppo the quarters were about the size of small villages. ... Many of the quarters, *though not everyone* [emphasis added] need have been a solidarity, were closely knit and homogeneous communities... Yet, in Mamluk times at least, the quarters of Syrian and Egyptian towns should not be imagined as armed fortresses. Permanent defences had not yet been built into the *ḥārāt*, and the defensive aspect of Muslim urban quarters which was characteristic of later Ottoman times, when heavy doors barred unauthorized entry had not fully evolved.... [T]he quarters were not isolated ghettos but adjacent streets and districts within the cities. Not in their lives, but only in times of troubles did they seal themselves off from each other.[6]

[5] Sauvaget, *Aleppo*, 105–106.
[6] Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 85–95.

Much like Sauvaget before him, Lapidus stresses the compartmentalized alignment of the city and its seemingly fractured landscape. Moreover, he highlights the importance of the neighborhood to the individual resident and the segregation between the city's residential and commercial areas. Despite the utter lack of veri able statistics, he also hazards a guess as to the average size of the neighborhood and its population.

The most signi cant difference between Sauvaget and Lapidus is that the latter is cognizant of the fact that changes can and, indeed, did take place over time. Whereas Sauvaget considered neighborhoods to be immutable xtures on the urban landscape, Lapidus is well aware of, say, the developments that set apart the Ottoman from the Mamluk period. For example, he draws a correlation between the neighborhoods segregated and fortress-like appearance to periods of urban violence and social unrest under Ottoman rule. In other words, the physical barriers and defence apparatuses that were erected between neighborhoods were only in use during times of con ict. Lapidus also notes that the paucity of data in all that concerns the administrative functions of the Mamluk neighborhood limits scholars to rudimentary conclusions.

On the topic of neighborhoods, the major studies on Syrian medieval urbanism may be summarized into ve principal hypuse during times of con

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Bʿaalbakkī's house was located in al-Maghāribah, a toponym that implies that this neighborhood was populated by Muslims from North Africa. At the very least, these documents attest to the fact that Muslims had no inhibitions against living among their co-religionists from different parts of the world or in predominantly *dhimmī* neighborhoods. One may thus infer that Muslims were less averse than other groups to residing among minorities.

In all likelihood, it was not out of the ordinary for Muslims to live in mostly Jewish or Christian areas. Conversely, it appears as though the minorities were less inclined to dwell among other groups, as there is no record in the Ḥaram of either Jew or Christian residing outside their communities' strongholds. How much may be inferred from this *argumentum e silentio* is surely debatable. Even if documents once existed of, say, a Greek-Orthodox residing among Jews, it may not have been filed in the Ḥaram archive for any number of reasons. In any event, against the background of heightening Islamization and the rise in interfaith clashes,[36] minorities could very well have been deterred from moving out of their communal centers. Put differently, their spatial mobility seems to indicate that they perceived themselves as the city's sovereigns and were thus more inclined to live apart from their "immediate" social circle. Equally, there is no evidence that *dhimmis* took up residence in predominately Muslim neighborhoods. This hypothesis is commensurate with Lapidus's survey of major Syrian cities during that same period, as he points to distinctly Christian and Jewish neighborhoods in Damascus, Aleppo, and Ḥims, among others.[37]

In 1395, the French traveller Ogier d'Anglure noted that Jerusalem's Christians and Jews were confined to their own small enclaves, whereas the Muslims lived throughout the city.[38] According to his description, the religious minorities' neighborhoods were virtual islands within a sea of Muslims. The same social demographic picture arises from d'Anglure's description of Gaza.[39] For the most part, it seems as though confessional segregation was ratcheted up during the Ottoman period. This may have stemmed from the importance that the Sublime Porte conferred on the millet system, according to which every sanctioned religious community governed themselves in accordance to their own laws. For example, Raymond's survey

[36] These issues are addressed at length in Chapter 8.
[37] Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 85–86.
[38] O. d'Anglure, *Le Sainte Voyage de Jerusalem* (Paris, 1876), 40–41.
[39] Ibid, 41.

of Ottoman Antioch shows that approximately forty-five of the city's neighborhoods were run by one of the millets.[40] Although there are no records suggesting that the Mamluks employed such a system in *al-Shām*, some researchers contend that it was in place before the Ottoman conquest.

Of course, the tendency of minority groups to live among their own is not limited to pre-modern and/or Syrian cities. Robert Park observed that every "great American city" features ethnic enclaves, such as New York's China Town or Chicago's Little Sicily.[41] Despite the rise of modern technologies that tend to disrupt and alter long-standing historical and sociocultural boundaries, these minority strongholds are still commonplace in many metropolises. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that religious minorities under Mamluk rule preferred to live in homogenous settings.

ZONING AND SPATIAL SEPARATION BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL AND PUBLIC AREAS

Eugen Wirth averred that the defining element of the Oriental-Islamic city was the centrality of its markets and bazaars and a strong emphasis on commerce.[42] Accordingly, he believed that the city was segregated into two well-defined zones: residential and public-cum-commercial. This view also undergirds von Grunebaum's description of the Muslim city:

> In its business districts (and in a sense in its "official" section – mosque and government buildings – as well) the unity of the town is apparent. The arrangement of the residential districts reflects the separatist tendencies at work within it.[43]

Although the idea of the two-pronged Muslim city has long been criticized and repeatedly debunked,[44] it is still commands a strong presence in influential works and popular textbooks, especially general studies that claim to adopt a comprehensive theoretical approach to Muslim cities.[45]

[40] A. Raymond, *Grand villes arabes à l'époque ottoman* (Paris, 1985), 176–177.
[41] R. E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment," *The American Journal of Sociology* 20/5 (1915): 582.
[42] E. Wirth, "Zum Problem des Bazars (Sūq, Çarşi)," *Der Islam* 51 (1951): 203–260; idem, "Zum Problem des Bazars (Sūq, Çarşi). Versuch einer begriffsbestimmung und Theorie des traditionellen Wirtschaftszentrums der orientalisch-islamischen Stadt," *Der Islam* 52 (1975): 6–46.
[43] Von Grunebaum, "Structure," 147.
[44] E.g., Raymond, "Islamic City."
[45] For example, V. F. Costello, *Urbanization in the Middle East* (Cambridge, 1977), 8–21. Also see N. Elisséef, "Physical Lay-Out," in R. B. Serjeant (ed.), *The Islamic City* (Paris, 1980): 90–103.

For instance, Beaumont, Blake, and Wagstaff's highly acclaimed (almost iconic) study *The Middle East: A Geographical Study* testifies to the fact that this model still pervades the contemporary field of urban studies. The book's section on the morphology of the Islamic town offers the following analysis:

> A notable feature of Islamic towns was the segregation of residential and commercial areas. The centre of the commercial quarter was usually the great mosque or Friday mosque, which in turn influenced the disposition of many activities around it.[46]

According to the Google Scholar index, this work has been cited in seventy-two publications; in contrast, Raymond's seminal studies *Grand villes arabes à l'époque ottoman* and "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views" (a must-read for anyone who is even remotely interested in Middle Eastern urban studies) have merited all of forty-five and fifteen hits, respectively.

Be that as it may, Mujīr al-Din's account of Mamluk Jerusalem supports the prevalent view whereby the region's cities were divided into two distant zones. According to Mujīr al-Din, the bazaar ran along the city's major thoroughfares.[47] For example, dozens of specified markets (e.g., hay, coal and wheat) lined the central artery that extends from Bāb Dāwūd (the city's main western entrance, presently known as the Jaffa Gate) to Bāb al-Silsila, on the Ḥaram al-Sharif's outer western wall. However, the present research findings demonstrate that these same streets also contained residential units.

During my field survey of Jerusalem, I discovered a residential building from the Mamluk era adjacent to Khān al-Sulṭān, one of the city's central markets. The building consists of several residential units that are connected by a central corridor. The entrance spilled out into what was Mamluk Jerusalem's main commercial road. Moreover, the building abutted the said *khān* to the east. Similarly, a cluster of houses was found near the intersection of Jerusalem's two main roads: ṭarīq Bāb Dāwud and ṭarīq al-Wād. In fact, my findings show that it was rather commonplace for residential units to be located on the city's major streets and in close proximity to commercial areas. D'Anglure's travel diary from the late 1300s supports these conclusions:

[46] P. Beaumont, G. H. Blake and J. M. Wagstaff, *The Middle East: A Geographical Study* (London, 1988), 207.
[47] Mujīr al-Dīn, al-Uns 2, 52–53.

In the commercial areas of the city where goods are sold, one may also encounter beautiful and vaulted streets built of ne stones and [with] windows from above for

socioreligious norms and Ṣūfī orders, the charitable trust was one of the pillars of Muslim communities.

Charitable trusts were set up time and again by Muslim leaders, thereby helping to shape, influence, and maintain the civil sphere in myriad Islamic societies.[14] Among the elite's motives for founding these institutions was to carry out policy, display their power, and eliminate any doubts as to their religious devotion.[15] Having established the general scope of this phenomenon, the next obvious step is to assess the overall contribution of endowments to the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*.

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ENDOWMENTS ON THE ECONOMY AND LANDSCAPE OF THE MIDDLE EAST: THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Scholars have tended to view the profusion of endowments in the Muslim Middle East as one of the principal reasons behind the region's economic tribulations in the late 1800s. More specifically, the charitable trust is perceived as an institution that inevitably leads to economic stagnation. Among the *waqf*'s more prominent detractors were Hamilton Bowen and Harold Gibb. On the basis of data gleaned from different periods and areas, they concluded that endowment assets have a strong propensity for

[14] S. A. Arjomand, "Islamic Philanthropy, Public Policy and Civil Society: Waqf and the Institutions of Learning from the Tenth to the Fourteenth Century." Paper presented at the conference Philanthropy and Culture: A Comparative Perspective (New York, May 11–12, 1995). Also see idem, "The Law, Agency, and Policy in Medieval Islamic Society: Development of the Institutions of Learning from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41/2 (1999): 263–293; and K. Timur, "The Provision of Public Goods under Islamic Law: Origins, Impact, and Limitations of the Waqf System," *Law & Society Review* 35/4 (2001): 841–898.

[15] G. Bear, "The Waqf as a Prop for the Social System (Sixteenth-Twentieth Centuries)," *Islamic Law and Society* 4 (1997): 264–297. Also see O. Peri, "The Waqf as an Instrument to Increase and Consolidate Political Power: The Case of Khasseki Sultan Waqf in Late Eighteenth Century Jerusalem," *AAS* 17 (1983): 47–62; and Y. Frenkel, "Baybars and the Sacred Geography of *Bilād al-Shām*: A Chapter in the Islamization of Syria's Landscape," *JSAI* 25 (2001): 153–170. On the impact of foundation projects on the Cairene landscape, see D. Behrens-Abousief, *Cairo of the Mamluks. A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London-New York, 2007), passim. For their impact on Anatolia, see S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor: And the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971); and E. S. Wolper, "The Politics of Patronage: Political Change of the Construction of Dervish Lodges in Sivas," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 39–47. Also see R. D. Machesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of A Shrine 1480–1889* (Princeton NJ, 1991).

rapid decline.[16] William Heffening accentuates what he believes to be the weaknesses of the charitable trust, including extortion; the diversion of working hands from agriculture and industry to nonproductive institutions; and, above all, the high percentage of fertile lands that were left outside of the general market economy.[17] Many *Awqāf* indeed owned arable land, and there is reason to believe that mismanagement was responsible for poor yields and even desolation. Gabriel Baer emphasized what he believes to be the devastating effects of endowments on much needed economic reforms: "Throughout Islamic history *awqāf* have been undergoing a perpetual process of dismemberment. Their assets gradually deteriorated and sooner or later they were alienated."[18] According to Baer, the main reason that endowment lands tended to be neglected is that they inevitably produced less revenue than other tracts.[19] Since it was forbidden to sell lands held in trust, they could not be used as collateral for further development. In addition, the *waqf* administrators (*mutawallīs*) usually had no vested interest to develop the assets under their supervision because of the uncertainty as to whether their heirs would benefit from them. Therefore, they preferred to pocket the profits rather than invest them back into the endowment. Shlomo Goitein and Aharon Ben Shemesh claimed that the *waqf* system was the main reason behind the conspicuous debris, hazardous buildings, and dilapidating institutions that informed the cities of the Middle East and the poor use of arable lands. They also argued that the system was a moral hazard, for it allowed many generations to live off their parents' capital instead of engaging in real work.[20] In Abu Lughod's *longue durée* study of Cairo, she explains that the very act of endowment insulates the attendant land and buildings from the normal laws of supply and demand. This state of affairs was directly responsible for the "universally observed phenomenon in Islamic cities: that *waqf* property tended to deteriorate faster than non-*waqf* property."[21] In sum, many scholars view endowments to be stagnant properties that hinder the economy, especially in urban frameworks.

[16] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Muslim Culture in the Near East* 1 (London, 1957), 177.
[17] W. Heffening, "waqf's," *EI*[1] 8: 1096–1103.
[18] G. Baer, "The Dismemberment of Awqāf in Early 19th Century Jerusalem," *AAS* 13/3 (1979): 220.
[19] G. Baer, *Land Reform in Egypt, Summary and Evaluation* (Jerusalem, 1958), 13–16; and idem, *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago, 1969), 81.
[20] S. D. Goitein and A. Ben Shemesh, *Muslim Law in Israel* (Jerusalem, 1957), 169.
[21] J. L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, 1971), 77.

Over the past few decades, there has been a substantial increase in research focusing on the spatial aspects of endowments and their role within the urban system.[22] Eckhart Ehlers points to three spheres in which charitable trusts left a positive mark on the Middle Eastern city: the spatial, the socioeconomic, and the political.[23] Given the volume of charitable trusts and their unmistakable presence in urban environments, these institutions were a major player in the pre-modern Syrian city.

ENDOWED COMPOUNDS IN JERUSALEM AND TRIPOLI

In the next few sections, I endeavor to map out the charitable trusts of Mamluk Tripoli and Jerusalem. With this objective in mind, I collected data on buildings that are considered *waqfs* or "*waqf*-related properties." The list is constructed chronologically and according to building type. All the data that I amassed on Jerusalem and Tripoli may be found in appendices A and B, respectively. Due to the lack of available information, it was impossible to establish a cartographic representation of endowments in Safad.

Aside from existing buildings, my principal sources were endowment inscriptions and deeds. For the most part, these documents specify the religious purpose of the endowment in their opening statement. Thereafter, they list the various assets that are linked to the *waqf* and stipulate how the revenues are to be distributed. Admittedly, the conversion of this textual data into spatial representation is highly problematic. The following endowment inscription from Tripoli exemplifies the challenges that I encountered.

In 760/1359, the provincial *ḥājib*[24] (chamberlain), Amir Sayf al-Dīn Aqṭurāq, endowed a new building, al-Saqraqiyya Madrasa, to the people of Tripoli. According to the dedication on the building's façade, the

[22] For example, M. E. Bonine, "Islam and Commerce: Waqf and the Bazaar of Yazd, Iran," *Erdkunde* 41 (1987): 182–196.

[23] E. Ehlers, "Waqf and the City of the Islamic Middle East: An Introduction," in J. F. Troin (ed.), *Recherches urbain sur le monde arabo-musulman, actes du symposium international tenu à Glasgow les 29–30 novembere 1991*, Fascicule billingue de recherchehes no. 24 (Tour, 1993): 56–63.

[24] Save for the governorship, this was the most important position in the province. See, for example, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā* 4, 20–21; and D. Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army – III," *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 60. [Rpt. in D. Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250–1571)* (London, 1977), no. I].

founder's original intention was to build a mosque.[25] The inscription also enumerates the institution's sources of revenue:

– Two adjoining farms in the district of Ḥiṣn al-Akrād.
– Orchards near the village of Rishʿīn in the Ṭarāblus district.
– Four shops in the Confectioners Market (suq al-Ḥālawiyyīn) in Ṭarāblūs.
– Three houses in the vicinity of khān al-Miṣriyyīn in Ṭarāblus.
– Three-quarters of a house due north of khān al-Muhandis.
– A communal oven known as Kurr Khūlid.[26]

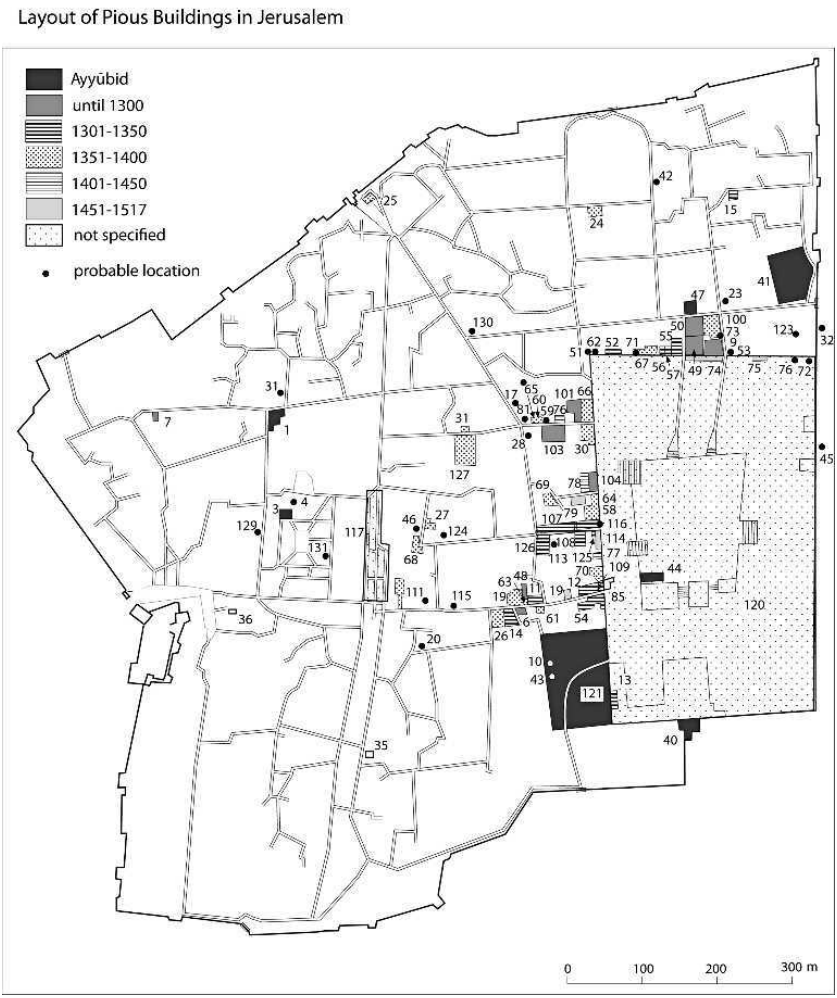
The array of buildings, agricultural fields, and markets that were attached to this institution is characteristic of endowments in general, as many other charitable trusts were built and maintained along these lines. In fact, whenever prominent figures, such as sultans or high-ranking amirs, were involved, the trust's income-producing components were usually quite significant, so as to ensure a steady influx of revenue.[27] Whether the buildings in question were constructed from scratch or purchased second-hand, *waqfs* had a significant impact on local society.

Against this backdrop, mapping out the endowed institutions of a Mamluk-era city entails certain problems. The main obstacle is that most of the extant deeds from this period offer insufficient descriptions and locations for devising an accurate "modern" map. At the time the records were formulated, there was certainly no need to pinpoint, say, a shop's location, for this information was common knowledge, and the ownership was ordinarily undisputed. Another hindrance is the absence of specific figures in the documents. For instance, it was customary to merely write "the shops" in a certain market, without noting how many or where they actually stood. These difficulties, inter alia, prevent us from compiling a precise or fully detailed

[25] M. M. Sobernheim, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscirptionum Arabicurum*, 25 (Le Caire, 1909), 109–111; and H. Salam Leibich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge MA, 1983), 135, n. 49. The deed does not explain why he ended up building a *madrasa* instead of a mosque.

[26] The inscription was originally published by Sobernheim, ibid. Also see ʿA. Tadmurī, *Taʿrīkh wa-Athār Masajid w-al-Madaris Ṭarāblus* (Tripoli, 1974), 290–293, whose version slightly differs.

[27] For a quantitative analysis of the land revenues of endowments in Jerusalem, see D. Powers, "Revenues of Public Waqfs in Sixteenth Century Jerusalem," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 9 (1987): 162–202. U. Harmaan discusses the illegal use of land tracts (*Iqṭāʿ*); idem, "Mamluk Endowment Deeds as a Source for the History of Education in Late Medieval Egypt," *Al-Abhath* 28 (1980): 31–47.



MAP 5.1 Layout of endowment buildings in Jerusalem

map.[28] Of course, the absence of certain buildings means that the presence of *waqfs* and *waqf*-related buildings will be understated.

[28] The most comprehensive analysis of houses, shops, and other properties that were allocated or connected to endowments in Jerusalem is provided by H. Lutfi, *Al-Quds al-Mamlukiyya. A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents* (Berlin, 1985). See pp. 119–140 therein for a discussion of *waqf* revenues as a source of income for the city. Drawing on various documents, Lufti provides detailed lists of houses and other compounds that were associated with charitable trusts. However, even this meticulous list does not enable us to reconstruct their exact location within the city.

map 5.2 Layout of endowment buildings in Tripoli

Map 5.1 of Jerusalem also includes endowments from the Ayyubid period, primarily because I deemed it important to note the considerable use of trusts that accompanied the return of Islamic rule to the city after the Battle of Hittīn (1187). As demonstrated later, these activities are pertinent to our understanding of the changes that the city underwent during the

the research of Remie Constable, Katia Cytryn-Silverman judiciously stresses the connection between the Mamluk caravansary and versions of the inn (*fundaqo* or *pandocheion*) that predated the Muslim conquest.[53] One of the changes to the *khān* under Islamic rule was the charitable functions it was assigned in cities throughout the Middle East.[54] This is quite evident in an endowment deed that was drafted by the provincial governor of Tripoli, Amir Sayf al-Dīn Ṭynāl al-Nāṣirī, in 1336.[55] The religious core of the *waqf* consisted of a mosque and a mausoleum (*turba*). However, in order to fund the trust in perpetuity, Ṭynāl generously endowed the following assets to the mosque: "a garden known as Ḥamawī; two shops adjacent to the door of the mosque; a garden formerly known as Alṭunṭāsh; two shops next to the Sūq al-Silāḥ [Market of the Armory]; a third of the *khān* known as the Old Dār al-Wakāla; a village named Arzunīyya."[56] In addition, the governor earmarked the revenues from these properties for the mausoleum: "the upper floor of a place known as al-Khāṭīb; sixteen shops and sixteen rooms in a *qayṣariyya* near al-Arzūnī Mosque; two shops by Sūq al-Ḥaddādīn [the Market of the Ironmongers]; all the shops and the floor [above] that were built on the Ancient Square [sic]; six shops built by the founder at the Suwayqat [little market] of the *Qādī* [sic]; three rooms above them; an area in the vicinity of the mosque; land south of the *maydān* [main square]."[57] This exhaustive list not only attests to the connections between caravansaries and the religious activity of *waqfs*, but to the complexity of endowments and their presence in many and manifold realms of urban life.

of this institution and its historical development. I am indebted to Dr. Katia Cytryn-Silverman for her insightful comments on this topic.

53 Cytryn-Silverman, *Road Inns*, 43. Charitable hostelries date back to Late Antiquity and even earlier. For more on the origins of this institution, see O. R. Constable, "Funduq and Fondaco in the Medieval Islamic World," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 3/I (2001): 17–30. In another article, Constable quotes from Ibn Ḥawqāl's description of commercial *fanādiq* in tenth-century Nishapur; idem, "Reconsidering the Origin of the Funduq," *Studia Islamic* 92 (2001): 195–196. Also see idem, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2003). At the outset of her book (pp. 1–10), she stresses the emergence of the inn and its many variants in the Greco-Roman world, as reflected by the panoply of extant terms. Moreover, she alludes to the multiple functions and forms this institution subsequently assumed in Islamic society; 234–265.

54 Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, 7.

55 For more on endowed urban *khāns*, see Cytryn-Silverman, *Road Inns*, 43, n. 184.

56 Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 87–88. Also see Salem, *Ṭarāblus al-Shām*, 475; Tadmurī, *Ta'rīkh wa-Athār*, 172. The above-cited list draws heavily on Salem-Leibich's suggested corrections of Sobernheim's reading; Salem-Leibich, *Tripoli*, 54–58.

57 Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 90–92.

During the Mamluk period, Tripoli served as a major port of entry for European merchants.[58] The large volume of incoming goods and people required custom houses, storage facilities, and lodgings. As it turned out, the caravansary was the perfect solution. The first *khāns* in Tripoli – al-Manzil, al-Khayyāṭīn, and Sūq al-Ḥarāj – were built on the northeastern side of the growing city, probably on account of its proximity to the main trade route, which traversed the city from the east.[59] These commercial compounds were constructed under the auspices of charitable trusts. The reason for this is that *khāns* were ideal sources of regular income for endowment founders seeking to ensure the long-term viability of their charitable venture.

Although Jerusalem lacked Tripoli's trade prowess, its prestigious religious study also came to expression in its unique network of pilgrim lodges. One of the main commercial districts in Jerusalem developed around the confluence of two major roads, ṭarīq al-Silsila and ṭarīq Khān al-Zayt. Most of the income from the cluster of shops near this intersection was slated for charitable trusts. To begin, the revenues from the eastern part of this market went to al-Aqṣā Mosque.[60] The western part, namely the Perfumers Market (Sūq al-ʿAṭṭarin), belonged to a *waqf* that was set up by none other than Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn for the *madrasa* he constructed in Jerusalem shortly after his arrival in 1188.[61] The revenues of khān al-ʿAnāba, which was located next to Bab al-Hiṭṭā on the north side of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, were also part of the sultan's endowment.[62]

Endowments were complex enterprises that were clearly susceptible to crises, especially due to their constant need for cash. With this in mind, the founders of charitable trusts, not least the members of the Mamluk elite, renovated and occasionally constructed new commercial areas for the sake of maintaining these pious endeavors. Given the magnitude of this phenomenon, *waqf*-related activities were instrumental to urban commerce.

The cases of Tripoli and Jerusalem also seem to indicate that endowments were a vital part of the Syrian city's tourism and pilgrimage facilities.

[58] E. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, passim. Of all the European powers, the Italian commercial cities had the strongest trade relations with the Mamluk sultanate; see D. S. Richards, "A Late Mamluk Document concerning Frankish Commercial Practice in Tripoli," *BSOAS* 62/1 (1999): 21–35.

[59] Salam-Leibich, *Tripoli*, 119. For more on the types of lodging that the *khāns* offered, see A. Raymond and G. Viet, *Les marchés du Caire, tradition annotée du texte de Maqrīzī. Texte Arabe et étude Islamiques*, vol. 14 (Paris, 1979), 1–16.

[60] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 52.

[61] Ibid., 44.

[62] Little, *Catalogue*, 94. Also see ʿAsalī, *Min Athārina*, 91.

During the Mamluk period, there were two main types of clientele for urban visitors' lodging. The first was the traveling merchant, for whom the principal solution was the caravansary. The second type of tourist was the pilgrim. Although non-Muslim pilgrims often stayed at *khāns*, they were clearly not the targeted market of what was commonly referred to as the *ribāṭ*. In Jerusalem, the *ribāṭ*'s emphasis on Muslim guests may be deduced from the locations of these establishments, as most of them were situated next to the western and northern walls of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.[63] This conclusion is corroborated by the accounts of Christian pilgrims. In 1384, thirteen Tuscans entered Palestine from the Sinai. As they made their way to Jerusalem, they occasionally stayed at *khāns*.[64] However, upon entering the city, they reverted to their "own" institutions, namely, those that were run by and slated for Christians. One of the Tuscan pilgrims, Giorgio Gucci, made the following entry in his travel diary:

> On the same day about noon we entered, in the name of God, Jerusalem, and out of respects for the devout and holy place, while still far off we took off our shoes and barefooted we went as far as the place where we put up; . . . and that day we put up in the place the Christian pilgrims put up, which is called the Pilgrims' Hospital; and it is only a stone's throw from the church of the Holy Sepulchre.[65]

In any event, Jerusalem became a popular destination for Muslim pilgrims during the Mamluk period. To meet this demand, the city's benefactors once again turned to endowments to supply the necessary accommodations. During a visit to Jerusalem in 661/1263, Sultan Baybars carefully examined the city's needs. He then devised a plan and provided funding for the renovation of various areas.[66] Among his initiatives was the construction of a hostelry outside the city walls, in the vicinity of the Mamilā Cemetery.[67] Khān al-Ẓāhir, as it is often referred to in the sources, was designated specifically for pilgrims to Jerusalem. The hostelry was

[63] See Map 6.1, p. 165.

[64] L. Frescobaldi, G. Gucci, and S. Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Syria in 1384*, trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (Jerusalem, 1948), 66. Sigoli mentions a *khān* outside of Gaza where the group spent the night.

[65] Ibid., 127. This excerpt was rendered from Italian to English by Bellorini and Hoade.

[66] Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓahīr, *Al-Rawd al-Zahīr fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓahīr*, ed. ʿA-ʿA. Khuwaṭir (Riyad, 1396/1976), 74.

[67] This location is suggested by, inter alia, Abū 'l-Fidā ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Kathīr and Al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya fī-Ta'rīkh 13 (Cairo, 1932), 275. However, the exact location of this *khān* has been the subject of scholarly debate. For a summation of the debate and an innovative interdisciplinary approach to this question, see K. Cytryn-Silverman, "Khān al-Ẓāhir bi-Ẓāhir al-Quds," *JRAS* Series 3, 19/2 (2009): 149–171.

maintained by revenues from land tracts throughout *al-Shām*.[68] Most of the establishment's budget was expended on the meals and other basic needs of its guests, who stayed free of charge. For instance, one section of the deed sets aside money for mending the pilgrims' shoes.[69]

Several more hostelries were established inside the city. In 666/1267, Amir ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Aydughdī al-Kubakī founded a *ribāṭ* next to Bāb al-Naẓir, one of the gates of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.[70] This compound was mainly intended for poor pilgrims. Two other inns for Muslim pilgrims were built in the immediate vicinity: Ribāṭ al-Manṣūrī was endowed in 681/1282 and Ribāṭ al-Kurt al-Manṣūrī twelve years later.[71] Among the construction projects that Ṭankiz carried out during his tenure as governor of Syria was Ribāṭ al-Nisāʾ. As its name reveals, this hostel was designated especially for women.[72]

These sorts of institutions continued to be set up in Jerusalem throughout the Mamluk period. Conforming to the needs and desires of the Muslim pilgrims, most of the benefactors sought to locate these *khāns* as close as possible to Ḥaram al-Sharīf.[73] The construction and maintenance of caravansaries would not have been feasible without charitable trusts. Notwithstanding their "not-for-profit" makeup, *khāns* of all kinds – be they for merchants or pilgrims – had an enormous impact on local commerce and tourism.

WATER INSTALLATIONS AND BATH HOUSES

The reconstruction of Tripoli at a new location obviously required a whole new set of urban infrastructures, including an aqueduct to channel water into the city.[74] Although the aqueduct was not initially set up as a charitable trust by, say, a private benefactor, this vital conduit soon came under

[68] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 87.
[69] Abū ʿl-Maḥāsin and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Muluk Miṣr waʾl-Qāhira* 7 (Cairo, 1956), 121.
[70] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 43.
[71] Ibid., 37, 43.
[72] Ibid., 36. The *khān* was adjacent to Bāb al-Silsila (the Gate of the Chain), one of the main entrances to Ḥaram al-Sharif.
[73] Ribāṭ al-Mārdīnī was built in 1361 and Ribāṭ al-Zamanī in 1485; see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 288 and 412–414. The patrons also sought to embed symbolic icons in prominent locations throughout the city. I elaborate on this topic in Chapter 6.
[74] Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Anṣarī al-Dimashkī, *Kitāb Nukhbāt al-Dahr fī ʿAjāʾib al-Barr w-al-Baḥr*, ed. A. F. Mehren (St. Petersburg, 1866), 207; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣar*, vol. 2, 131–132; and al- Ẓāhirī, *Kitāb Zubdat*, 48.

the influence of *waqfs*. In 760/1358, the *ḥājib* (chamberlain) of the city, Amir Aqṭurq, established a compound that included both a mosque and a mausoleum.[75] The endowment deed specifies that the mosque in entitled to three-quarters of a finger worth of water from Tripoli's aqueduct.

The following incident sheds further light on the relation between waterworks and charitable trusts. Initially built during the Hellenistic period,[76] Jerusalem's aqueducts were repaired on several occasions by Mamluk officers.[77] In 873/1468, the upper aqueduct (also known as *Qanāt al-Sabīl*) was badly frayed.[78] That same year, a feud erupted between the provincial governor, Amir Damurdāsh al-ʿUthmānī, and the *nāẓir al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn* (supervisor of the two noble sanctuaries), Amir Birdibek al-Tājī. The circumstances behind the imbroglio are somewhat vague, but the water installations were apparently among the causes. It appears as though the supervisor drafted a plan to fix the aqueduct and passed on the instructions to his workers. After the project got under way, he personally went to inspect the progress around a site known as Birkat al-Sultān (the Sultan's Pool, roughly 0.5 km from the present-day Jaffa gate).[79] The governor was waiting for him there with a handful of assistants, who started to abuse al-Tājī both verbally and physically. In all likelihood, it was only thanks to the arrival of Jamāl al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Dīrī, the city's Ḥanafī judge, that the supervisor managed to flee back to the city and save his life.

According to Mujīr al-Dīn, this "despicable affair" (*al-qabiḥā*)[80] riled up the local residents, whose support was split between the governor and supervisor. In consequence, a special meeting was held at "the mosque" (probably al-Aqṣā), whereupon a letter explaining the circumstances was dispatched to the sultan in Cairo. In turn, the sultan sent a special delegate to try and reconcile between the parties, but his efforts were in vain. In any event, Mujīr al-Dīn had no doubt as to the real culprit behind this affair:

> The organization of the blessed endowments in both Jerusalem and Hebron was in a disorderly state due to the feckless management of Birdibek al-Tājī [the supervisor

[75] The compound was later known as Madrasa al-Saqraqiyya. However, in the deed itself, the founder refers to the planned compound as a mosque. See *RCEA* 16, 215.
[76] A. Mazar, "A Survey of the Aqueducts of Jerusalem," in D. Amit, J. Patrich, and Y. Hirshfeld (eds.), *The Aqueducts of Israel* (Portsmouth, 2002), 210–242.
[77] Ashthor, "Jerusalem," 82–83.
[78] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 275.
[79] The Jaffa Gate is the western entrance of the current wall around Jerusalem's Old City.
[80] Ibid., 275.

of the endowments]. Consequently, the public order has deteriorated dramatically and the number of thefts and highway robberies has multiplied considerably.[81]

In Mujīr al-Dīn's estimation, it was the supervisor of endowments who was responsible for the aqueduct's renovation. As part of its main function of supplying water to the Ḥaram area, the aqueduct also served other important charitable trusts and, of course, the population of Jerusalem, which was soon hit by a severe drought. The very fact that the distinguished chronicler blames the supervisor for the general discord further attests to the importance of *waqfs* in all that concerns the provision of basic municipal services.

One of the main facilities that required a constant flow of water was the bath house (Ḥammām). Most bath houses were part of the endowment network. In Safad, the revenues of the bath house at the Perfumers Market (Sūq al-ʿAṭṭarin) were earmarked for the town's above-mentioned Jāmʿi al-Aḥmar (Red Mosque) at around 663/1265.[82] Another bath house was built near the town's citadel in 770/1368 by Amir Sayf al-Dīn Manjak al-Yūsufī. Its revenues helped maintain an eponymous *madrasa* that the official had built in Jerusalem.[83]

At least eleven bath houses are mentioned in al-Nābulusī's description of early Ottoman Tripoli,[84] five of which are dated to the Mamluk period: Ḥammām ʿizz al-Dīn (est. 693/1294), Ḥammām al-Ḥajīb (est. 701/1301), Ḥammām al-Nūrī (c. 730/1330), Ḥammām al-Dawādār (date unknown), and Ḥammām al-Qalʿā (date unknown). The last bath house is the only one that was not built within the framework of a trust or mentioned in an endowment deed. Although these facilities were not part of a preconceived urban master plan, it does seem, according to Salam-Leibich, that there was a certain logic behind their alignment:

> The location of the bath was carefully considered. To suit the needs of the population, one was placed next to the Great Mosque to serve the neighborhood around it, one in the center of the commercial district next to two *khāns* to serve the densely populated area, and one on the other side of the river to the small right bank settlement.[85]

[81] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 275.
[82] *RCEA* 15, 200. Also see Y. Yadin, "Arab Inscription from Palestine," in *Eretz-Yisrael (In Memory of L. A. Mayer)*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem, 1964), 102–116 [Hebrew].
[83] This is recorded in the *waqfiyya* (endowment deed) of Madrasa al-Manjakiyya; see al-ʿAṣalī, *Maʿahid*, 210.
[84] ʿAbd al-Ghanī ibn Ismāʿīl al-Nābulusī, *Al-Tuḥfah al-Nābulusiyyah fī al-Riḥlah al-Ṭarāblusiyyah*, ed. H. Busse (Beirut, 1971), 73.
[85] Salam-Leibich, *Tripoli*, 170.

The end result of these individual projects was that every one of Safad's neighborhoods had a bath house. Moreover, it is evident that the founders of the *waqfs* to which they belonged took steps to provide these establishments with the optimal conditions for turning a profit and becoming economically self-sufficient.[86] In addition, it seems as though the patrons were equally attentive to the population's needs.

The influence of endowments could be felt in a wide range of urban networks: education, commerce, tourism, pilgrimage, waterworks, and more. The constant need for revenues with which to fund the trust's pious enterprises forced the beneficiaries to plan ahead. In other words, they had to see to it that the income-producing components of their *waqf* would, at the very least, cover all the basic expenditures. Given the sheer volume of charitable trusts in the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*, I contend that these institutions had a huge impact on the shape of the urban landscape, as well as on many other facets of the residents' lives, which transcended the religious or civic objective of each particular *waqf*. During the Mamluk period, endowments became the main tool for implementing urban policy. Indeed, it is thanks to the endowment deeds, inscriptions, and related documents that the traces of urban planning or even the existence of such a mindset can even be detected.

ENDOWMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

The profusion of activities connected to *waqfs* rendered them one of the Mamluk city's main sources of employment. In addition to their contribution to the job market, endowments were also a mechanism for channeling money into urban institutions and civic projects. During Sultan Baybars visit to Jerusalem, he decreed that an annual sum of 5,000 dirhams would go toward the maintenance of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.[87] Amir Arikmās al-Jalabānī (d. 838/1434), the governor and endowments' supervisor during the reign of Sultan Barsabāy (1422–1437), seems to have paid all the salaries of the Noble Sanctuary's workers out of his personal funds.[88]

[86] The annual revenues from a bath house could be substantial. For example, the Madrasa al-Manjakiyya received 6,400 *akçe* in 969/1562 from its associated bath house in Safad; see Powers, "Revenues," 176. At the time, the price of one *raṭl* (500 g.) of flour was two *akçe*; see A. Cohen, *Economic Life in Ottoman Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 1989), 129–131 and appendix.

[87] During that same visit, he ordered the construction of khān al-Ẓahīr; see Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓahīr, *Al-Rawd al-Zahīr*, 74. This yearly allowance is also mentioned in al-Maqrizī, *Sulūk* 1, 491.

[88] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 264–265.

Moreover, the endowment deed of Amir Ṭaynāl's mosque and mausoleum in Tripoli specified that any of the *waqf*'s revenues that remained after payroll would go to the city's poor.[89] To get a real sense for the direct impact of a charitable trust on a local job market, I present a detailed inventory of the job titles and remuneration of the staff at al-Madrasa al-Ashrafiyya, one of the largest institutions of learning in Jerusalem. Part of a sultanic endowment, the *madrasa* was one of the most luxurious compounds in Mamluk Jerusalem.[90] Its grandeur notwithstanding, al-Ashrafiyya's employee roster is indicative of the range of professionals and typical salaries of the era's charitable trusts. On the occasion of the *madrasa*'s inauguration in 887/1482, the *waqf*'s dedication plaque was mounted and its endowment deed was officially deposited. The deed listed all the institution's employees in the following order:[91]

The director and head teacher – ten gold dinars per month.
A reader of *ḥadīth* – four *raṭl*[92] of bread per diem.
Thirty sufis – twenty-one at 200 dirhams per day and nine at 320.
A servant charged with tending to the Quran – not specified.
A servant tending to the box containing the Quran– not specified.
A clerk – not specified.
Six readers – not specified.
Imām – 300 dirhams and two loafs of bread per diem.
Mukabbir[93] – 200 dirhams and two loafs of bread.
A reader of Quran – 200 dirhams and two loafs of bread.
A reader of al-Bukhārī (a collection of traditions) – 200 dirhams and two loafs of bread.
A gate keeper – 600 dirhams and two loafs of bread per day.
A servant responsible for the carpets and candles – 200 dirhams.
A servant to attend to the carpets and the purification facility – 150 dirhams.
A servant in charge of the supply of cold water (*muzammalātī*)[94] – 500 dirhams and two loafs of bread.

[89] Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 91–92.
[90] S. Tamari, "Al-Ashrafiyya – An Imperial Madrasa in Jerusalem," in Y. Mansur (ed.), *Studies in Arabic and Islam* (Ramat Gan, Israel 1974), 64–69 [Hebrew].
[91] *CIA* 2/2, 214.
[92] The *raṭl* may vary in weight, but it is roughly equivalent to a pound or half a kilogram; M. Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gwichte* (Leiden, 1970), 27.
[93] This is the person charged with reciting "God is great" during prayers.
[94] A *muzammala* is a tank for cooling water; see E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* I (Cambridge, 1964), 1253.

A servant responsible for the water supply – 300 dirhams.
Inspector – 250 dirhams per diem.

It is probably impossible to even approximate the number of people who made a living, either directly or indirectly, from endowments. That said, just the sixteen *madrasas* of Tripoli and the roughly fifty in Jerusalem were a source of income for hundreds of families. To this must be added the employees of mosques, Ṣūfī lodges, bath houses, and many other institutions that were somehow tied to charitable trusts. In consequence, their total contribution to the urban job market must have been essential, if not critical.

Be that as it may, the endowment system had its flaws. As evidenced by legal documents found at the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, *waqf* employees were under constant stress due to the tenuous budgets of their workplaces. Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣirī was a Jerusalem-based scholar during the second half of the fourteenth century. In 770/1368, he testified before a judge that he was unemployed and thus unable to provide for his family. As a result, he petitioned the court for a daily portion of bread in return for reciting prayers at Ribāṭ al-Manṣūrī,[95] and the judge granted him a stipend from the inheritance of a shaykh. In 774/1372, the scholar was appointed a reciter at the Dome of the Rock and Riwāk Bāb al-Silsila (the arched area at the western entrance to the holy precinct) for fifteen dirhams a month.[96] Two years later, he requested to be installed as a reciter at Turbat Ṭaz,[97] and the request was approved. In 777/1376, his position was "confirmed" at a fixed salary of thirty-five dirhams a month;[98] some two years later, the compound's supervisor decreed the appointment at the "customary salary."[99] That same year, while continuing to fill his post in front of the Dome of the Rock for fifteen dirhams a month, the scholar asked to be assigned to one of the city's *madrasas*.[100] The appeal was granted pending a job opening.[101] All told, the scholar had apparently done quite well for himself, as in 780/1379 he bought a house (*dār*) for 825 dirhams.[102] However, if al-Nāṣirī's claims are to be taken at face value, his prosperity

[95] Little, *Catalogue*, 39, no. 13. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Khader Salameh for his invaluable assistance with the documents of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf.
[96] Ibid., 247, no. 603.
[97] Ibid., 43–44, no. 310.
[98] Ibid., 38, no. 7.
[99] Ibid., 33–34, no. 303.
[100] Ibid., 38–39, no. 10.
[101] Ibid., 27, no. 12 and 33–34, no. 303.
[102] Ibid., 278, no. 39.

did not last for long. Appearing in court that same year, he stated that he had no professional position in Jerusalem and was thus at a loss to support himself. He also mentioned that he had served as a salaried reciter for twenty years and then offered to recite *ḥadīth* for twenty dirhams a month.[103] Claims of financial hardship notwithstanding, that same year, he was also appointed the Jerusalem proxy (*wakīl*) of a senior-ranking officer from Damascus,[104] and his wife, Shīrīn bint ʿAbd Allah, purchased a slave girl for 498 dirhams in 784/1382.[105] In another court hearing five months earlier, one of his divorcees, Qartamur bint ʿAmr, relinquished all her claims against him, save for her bride price (*ṣadāq*).[106] During this session, the scholar was referred to as a ṣūfī in al-Khānqāh al-Ṣalāḥiyya. Does this mean that he stopped working at the other institutions, or was this but another "part-time position"? Whatever the case, in 787/1385, he was again a reciter at the Noble Sanctuary. He held this job for at least several more months before being appointed to the same position at the Turba al-Awḥadiyya in January 1386.[107] Burhān al-Dīn must have died shortly after, as in legal documents from 789/1387 he is referred to as the deceased (al-Marḥūm). As a result of his passing, his wife was granted a bimonthly stipend of 120 Damascus dirhams with which to support her sons.[108]

Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣirī's professional career spanned more than two decades, most of which was under the aegis of various endowments. His life as a religious scholar depended on trust funds and stipends. In fact, his financial state was largely predicated on the outcome of his encounters with various *waqf* supervisors. Throughout his tumultuous career, al-Nāṣirī apparently knew his share of anxiety, but also enjoyed periods of good fortune in which he concomitantly held multiple positions at several institutions. Over the years, and despite his propensity to complain and issue petitions, the scholar earned substantial sums of money

[103] Ibid., 38, no. 9.
[104] Ibid., 307, no. 490. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Sayf al-Dīn Ibrāhīm was one of the highest ranking Mamluk officers and was close to Sultan Barqūq (r. 1382–1389 and 1390–1399). His father served as the viceroy of Egypt under al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn. For more on the son, see Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥasin Yūsuf, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-l-Muṣtawfā baʿd al-Wāfī*, 1, ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1984), 248. The father is discussed in vol. 3, 85–88.
[105] Little, *Catalogue*, 291, no. 382.
[106] Ibid., 220, no. 699.
[107] Ibid., 26, no. 2 and 28, no. 203.
[108] Ibid., 331, no. 111.

that enabled him to buy a house and accumulate a sizeable library.[109] Like many other professionals, scholars, and day laborers in cities throughout the region, his livelihood depended on these endowed institutions.[110]

Al-Nāṣirī's vicissitudes notwithstanding, the contribution of *waqfs* to the urban job market was significant. Nevertheless, the question that begs asking is whether the endowment system – for all its red tape and dependence on philanthropic largesse – was flexible enough to allow for reforms and adjustments when an institution proved to be dysfunctional or stopped operating altogether.

THE DYNAMISM OF THE *WAQF* SYSTEM

Quite a few scholars have criticized the "destructive nature" of charitable trusts. More specifically, they consider the endowment system one of the main culprits behind the Middle East's economic decline, especially during the late Ottoman period.[111] The gist of their argument is that the *waqfs*' complex and rigid juridical nature, along with a host of other obstacles, constantly prevented their revenues from flowing back into the general economic cycle, so that their assets often constituted a burden on both the local and regional economy. For example, Abu Loghud argues that the charitable trusts in Cairo stifled the city's economic and morphological development.[112] However, a durability analysis that I conducted of several endowed institutions in Mamluk Jerusalem, as well as supporting evidence from other scholarly works, casts doubt on these assertions.

Most of our knowledge about Mamluk Jerusalem stems from the work of the local chronicler Mujīr al-Dīn. In his *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, he presents us with a most elaborate look at this provincial city in *al-Shām*. Endowment deeds appear to be one of Mujīr al-Dīn's main sources for the history of buildings:

> Al-Madrasa al-Maymūniyya by the Gate of the Flowers (Bāb al-Sāhira) is a former Byzantine church. It was endowed by Amir Fāris al-Dīn Abū Sʿaīd Maymūn ibn

[109] Ibid., 359, no. 61.

[110] It is rather tempting to pin the blame for Burḥān al-Dīn's employment woes on the problems of the *waqf* system. In many respects, working for *waqfs* is reminiscent of the tribulations faced by the modern-day nontenured academic. On the plights of nontenured academics in the contemporary United States; see M. Purcell, "Skilled, Cheap, and Desperate: Non-Tenure Track Faculty and the Delusion of Meritocracy," *Antipode* 39/1 (2007): 121–143.

[111] For example Baer, *Land Reform in Egypt*.

[112] See n. 24 above.

ʿAbd Allah al-Qaṣrī, the treasurer of al-Malik Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The date of endowment is Jumādā I 593 (April 1192). But nowadays the legal order (*niẓām*) has not been preserved, so that the compound is blighted.

Al-Turba al-Mihmāziyya was endowed by Amir Naṣir al-Dīn al-Mihmāzī but I have not come across its deed or date of construction. And it has now become a regular residential compound.[113]

As this passage shows, the author was less informative in cases lacking a deed, for these documents specify how the compound/institution was run. For instance, the deed identifies the assets that were attached to the enterprise and stipulates how the anticipated revenues were to be spent. Mujīr al-Dīn implies that al-Maymūniyya deteriorated, and the entire building was ultimately demolished because it failed to meet the terms of the deed and other legal obligations. Other struggling *waqfs* met a different fate. Some were simply abandoned and left in a desolate state before eventually assuming a new function; other *waqf* properties were sold or came under the purview of a different trust. The case of al-Madrasa al-Ḥasaniyya offers yet another possible scenario for an endowed compound. This institution is located on a premium site, north of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Its founder, a eunuch by the name of Shāhīn al-Ḥasanī, died before the building was either completed or functional. Despite the absence of a deed, the building was absorbed into the trust of al-Aqṣā Mosque, which became the beneficiary of that property's rent. The Ribāṭ Kurd, which was founded in 693/1294 by Amir Kurd al-Manṣūrī, went through a similar process.[114] In 843/1440, a new *madrasa* by the name of al-Jawhariyya began to encroach on the hostelry's boundaries, adjacent to the Bāb al-Ḥadīd gate. Burgoyne proposes the following explanation for these developments:

Jawhar probably took over Ribāṭ al-Kurd which might well have lost its *waqf* endowment by then, and included it entirely with his *madrasa*. . . [B]y 1440 Jawhar could probably achieve this only by taking over a foundation where the original *waqf* ceased to provide for its upkeep.[115]

In 792/1390, a man by the name of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ṭūlunī built a *madrasa* and transferred the endowment to Sultan al-Ẓāhir Sayf al-Dīn Barqūq.[116] Upon the sultan's passing nine years later, the place of learning was transferred to his son al-Malik al-Nāṣir Faraj, who continued to abide

[113] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 48.
[114] Ibid., 37.
[115] Burgoyne, "The Iron Gate Survey," 33.
[116] Ibid., 40; al-ʿAṣalī, *Maʿahid*, 269–270.

by the terms of the deed.[117] However, the record was apparently lost following Faraj's death (815/1412). Within thirty years, the functioning of the *madrasa* was hampered by this legal vacuum, but the compound was not abandoned. Instead, a distinguished clergyman, shyakh al-Islām, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad shāh al-Fanarī, purchased the compound using an *istibdāl* – a legal exchange mechanism that empowers a judge to approve of such transactions.[118] The change of ownership was authorized in 822/1419,[119] and the institution's name was changed to al-Madrasa al-Fanariyya. The use of this *istibdāl* enabled the school to continue to function well into the Ottoman period. As such, the Fanariyya epitomizes the potential shortcomings of the *waqf* system, as well as the possible solutions and flexibility that it provided.

The interdependence of an endowed institution's physical complex and activities on its organizational and legal structure was often reason enough for the deterioration and even destruction of its properties. Several scenarios were likely to hamper an institution's performance and even lead to the termination of its operations: problems with the *waqf*'s legal structure; a fall in revenues, and the severance of the pious enterprise from the endowment's income-producing wings. That said, what was the extent of this phenomenon? And what were its ramifications on the urban landscape? Given the absence of quantitative data, these questions cannot be fully answered. However, as we have seen, these contingencies might lead to the building's dilapidation and, more generally, urban blight. The disruption of the binding legal structure that was laid down by the founder and the onset of budgetary problems due to an economic crisis are among the endowment system's major weaknesses. Be that as it may, though, we have also discussed some cases in which the framework was sound enough to provide decent solutions for a struggling trust. Before jumping to any conclusions regarding the viability of the Islamic *waqf* system, let us tap into the broad scholarly discourse on this topic.

Although most parties to the debate accentuate the detrimental sides of charitable trusts, especially in the long term, some scholars have

[117] In my estimation, this expository approach is mainly the product of a worldview that Mujīr al-Dīn developed over the course of his career as a judge.

[118] For other uses of this mechanism in urban environments, see L. Fernandes, "Istibdal: The Game of Exchange and Its Impact on the Urbanization of Mamluk Cairo," in D. Behrens-Abouseif (ed.), *The Cairo Heritage: Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim* (Cairo, 2000), 203–222.

[119] M. Bilge, "Awqāf of a Madrasa in Jerusalem," *The Third International Conference of Bilād al-Shām: Palestine, Jerusalem*, vol. 1 (Amman, 1983), 2–27.

demonstrated their contribution to the economy and their capacity for rejuvenation. In his study of seventeenth-century Bursa, Haim Gerber posits that the *waqf* was a powerful framework that enhanced the urban economy.[120] Moreover, he cites a wide array of legal documents that attest to the fact that most of the supervisors complied with the legal conditions that were stipulated in the deed. Likewise, instances of neglect were rare, as most *waqf*-related buildings were kept in perfect or at least working condition. On the basis of his research on Jerusalem's court records (*sijil*) and *waqf* documents from the late Ottoman period and British Mandate, Yitzhak Reiter claims that Islamic endowments' reputation as inept guardians of their properties and thus a burden on the local economy was unwarranted.[121] In contrast to the overarching ills that pervaded the Ottoman Empire during its final years, Reiter claims that data harvested from the Jerusalem *shar'ī* court reveal a picture of robust *waqf* activity, including the renovation of properties and the acquisition of profitable new assets.

For the sake of comparison, I now examine the economy of modern-day Sefrou, a city in Morocco where charitable trusts have played a key role. Based on surveys carried out from 1965 to 1971, Clifford Geertz contends that endowments (*habus* in the local dialect) were the ballast of the local bazaar economy.[122] Most of the properties in Sefrou's market were controlled and owned by charitable trusts, which ensured that the rental rates for all commercial buildings remained affordable. Taking stock of the overall impact of endowments on the urban economy and landscape, Geertz wrote that "The *habus* is clearly one of the major landholders in the region. In the town – public facilities such as roads, parks, bureaus, and so on aside – it is the largest property owner by far. In the bazaar, it is the only one of any scale at all."[123] Despite its salutary contribution to manifold aspects of city life, Geertz notes that endowments' role as an urban prop had clearly waned over the course of the twentieth century.[124]

[120] H. Gerber, *Economy and Society in an Ottoman City: Bursa 1600–1700* (Jerusalem, 1988), 149–185.

[121] Y. Reiter, *Islamic Endowments in Jerusalem under the British Mandate* (London, 1996), 221–222.

[122] C. Geertz, "Sūq: the Bazaar Economy in Sefrou," in idem, H. Geertz, and L. Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (Cambridge, 1979), 151–154.

[123] Ibid., 151.

[124] Ibid., 154. Geertz is referring to one of the most commonplace policies toward endowments in the modern Middle East. The leaders of the region's newly founded nation-states

In different settings and times, charitable trusts displayed the wherewithal to overcome some of the juridical barriers that threatened to sow disruption and even close down their pious enterprises. Examples of legal problems included the abandonment of the *waqf* on the part of its lawful owners and a rigidly worded deed that prevented future caretakers from taking the necessary measures to contend with unforeseen developments. Although the cited cases from Jerusalem and Cairo attest to the potential for ineptitude and decline, it bears noting that not all dysfunctional *waqfs* ended up on the scrap heap. Before writing off the Islamic charitable trust as a historical failure, scholars should remember that some of these institutions lasted for centuries. In fact, many of the Mamluk compounds that I surveyed, like the Red Mosque in Safad, Ribāṭ al-Nisā' in Jerusalem, and Tripoli's Madrasa al-Nūriyya, are still standing more than seven hundred years after their construction. Conversely, buildings and institutions throughout the world are likely to be renovated, fall into disrepair, be abandoned, or completely change their function within years after their establishment.[125] In any event, the findings from the Mamluk cities of Syria certainly do not support the claims of stagnation, corruption, and other woes that charitable trusts supposedly brought on the urban realm.

At this point, I would like to express my reservations concerning the very question of the system's positive or negative effect on Islamic societies. Phrasing a question in this manner implies that there was an alternative to the *waqf*. However, the historical record shows that this was not the case, so that we lack a frame of reference or database upon which to substantiate any of these arguments. In a sense, this discussion echoes Stern's observation regarding the lack of institutions in Islamic cities. As I already opined, this view is predicated on a comparison with an overly sanguine picture of the traditional European city. Although comparative analyses are invaluable research tools, I fail to see the merits of a study that finds one side of the comparison lacking simply because it possesses a different set of cultural tools than its counterpart. Not only is this methodology inherently ethnocentric and based on an erroneous point of departure, but it utterly

took measures to pare back the number of *waqfs* and weaken their influence, with the objective of bolstering the government's standing as the principal provider of, say, welfare, infrastructure, and religious services. Also see Reiter, *Islamic Endowments*, 221–222.

125 As part of its plan to support the American housing market, the federal government has demolished run-down houses. For instance, a church in Columbia, South Carolina was razed because the community lacked the funding to repair it: "Columbia Tearing Down Blighted Buildings," *The State, South Carolina Homepage*, July 8, 2010. http://www.thestate.com/2010/07/08/1368546/columbia-tearing-down-blighted.html

ignores the *waqf*'s uniqueness and puts too much weight on the personal and cultural biases of scholars. Nonetheless, these ill-advised comparisons have haunted the field since its inception.[126]

ENDOWMENTS AS POLICY-MAKING TOOLS

Islamic Syria was beholden to a legal framework in which endowments were the main avenue for urban philanthropic activities.[127] The *waqf* constituted the best available solution for some of the lacuna in the Islamic code regarding the legal status of the city.[128] Given their prevalence and broad impact, I contend that charitable trusts are reliable indicators of trends and policies within the Mamluk sultanate. In the ensuing discussion, I examine whether foundation projects essentially served as "policy management tools." With this in mind, I will estimate the number of charitable trusts that were in operation, survey their fields of endeavor (e.g., economic or educational), and discuss the identity of their founders.

The art of modern policy making involves formulating principles that set the tone for government or government-supported decisions, actions, and other public matters. These principles are then implemented by various administrative bodies.[129] However, it is far from certain that this definition applies to the Mamluk Empire. Due to the absence of minutes documenting meetings in the sultans' court, the only way to ascertain Mamluk policy is by scrutinizing the sum total of the Mamluk elite's activities. For wide stretches of the Mamluk period, the leadership

[126] See, for example, Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City."

[127] C. Petry discusses the broader context of *waqfs* in the Mamluk period; idem, "Waqf as an Instrument of Investment in the Mamluk Sultanate: Security vs. Profit"? in M. Toru and J. E. Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa* (London, 2000), 99–116. For an in-depth discussion on the far-reaching social implications of charitable trusts in Egypt, see M. M. Amīn, *al-Awqāf wa-l-Ḥayāt ak-Ijtimāʿiyya fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1980). A comparative analysis of endowments in the Islamic world may be found in S. A. Arjomand, "Philanthropy, the Law, and Public Policy in the Islamic World before the Modern Era," in W. F. Ilchman, S. N. Katz, and E. L. Queen II (eds.), *Philanthropy in the World's Traditions* (Bloomington, 1998), 109–132.

[128] A. Raymond, "Les grand wafs et l'organisation de l'espace à Alep et au Carie à l'époque ottoman (XVI^{e}-XVII^{e} siècle)," *BEO* 31 (1979): 113–128. Sauvget clearly felt that the *waqf* had an important role; idem, "Alep," 73. Alternatively, B. Johnasen discusses the outlook of Ḥanafī jurists; idem, "Amwāl Ẓāhira and Amwāl Bāṭina: Town and Countryside as Reflected in the Tax System of the Ḥanafite School," in W. al-Qādī (ed.), *Studia Arabica and Islamica. Festschrift for Ihsān ʿAbbās on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Beirut, 1981), 247–263.

[129] For example, see R. J. Johnston, D. Gregory, and D. M. Smith (eds.), *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, 1994).

energetically promoted urban development. For instance, the reigns of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341) and al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāītbāy (1468–1496) were characterized by a frenzy of construction.[130] However, for various reasons – both internal and external – not all the sultans maintained this pace, and the number and magnitude of foundation projects varied over time.

In any event, the challenge of assaying the Mamluks' public policy involves more than just tracking construction activity. Can private endeavors – the establishment of a *waqf* is, by definition, a private act – be considered the outcome of sultanic policy? In Lapidus's estimation, the public actions of amirs in the cities of Mamluk *al-Shām* were, by and large, driven by personal and ephemeral interests. Simply put, Lapidus argued that a charitable deed on the part of a private individual should not be viewed as an attempt to fulfil the general policy goals of the leadership.[131] From a legal standpoint, Schacht posits that the founding of a *waqf* is not a public act.[132] Likewise, Makdisi's study on the establishment of *madrasas* during the eleventh century leaves no room for doubt that he believed that these were private initiatives.[133] Be that as it may, Said Amir Arjomand suggests that the individualistic nature of the establishment of an endowment does not preclude it from serving as an instrument of the regime's public policy.[134] In fact, these disparate private acts congeal into policy when they are carried out in a certain geographical sphere (cities), within the same sociopolitical context, and by people who share the same cultural background. This, then, is why sultans and amirs repeatedly took advantage of this mechanism (the *waqf*) when carrying out their urban policy. What is more, he states that in a patrimonial state, such as the Seljuq or post-Seljuq regimes, the acts of a sultan, vizier, or amir always have a public character. Drawing on Weber's definition of patrimonialism as a personal system of authority, Arjomand deems the division between private and public acts on the part of a patrimonial state's senior officials to be

[130] D. Beherens-Abouseif, "Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Ashraf Qāītbāy – Patrons of Urbanism," in U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet (eds.), *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Eras*, Oreintaliia Lovanesia Analecta Series, vol. 73 (Leuven, 1995), 267–284; and Amīn, *Awqāf*, 17.

[131] Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 69–75.

[132] J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), 209.

[133] G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1981), 19.

[134] Arjomand, "Philanthropy," 117.

completely artificial,[135] for the modern distinction between private and personal, on the one hand, and public and impersonal, on the other, simply does not exist in this sort of regime. Therefore, it would be illogical to try and break down, say, al-Nasīr Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn's daily outlay of 8,000 dirhams on sundry public projects – some of which were set up as *waqfs* – into sultanic and individualistic acts. What is more, his public conduct – there was a sharp rise in foundation projects during his reign – also signaled to other members of the Mamluk elite how he expected them to conduct themselves.[136] But what about an amir who established a charitable trust within the framework of his official position during a period in which the sultan wished to cut down on these sort of projects?[137] Alternatively, how are we to define, say, a *madrasa* in a provincial town in Syria that was endowed by an amir who was in temporary exile (*baṭṭāl*) in that same place? In my estimation, all these cases fall under the purview of general policy making and should thus be considered an integral part of the patrimonial state's activity because the benefactors' funds and personal status were part and parcel of their affiliation with the regime and their classification as Mamluks. Against this backdrop, endowments must be viewed as no less than a mechanism of state to redistribute money and property for the benefit of the entire Muslim population.

ENDOWMENT POLICY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

In this section, I present three activity graphs that chart the construction of endowed buildings throughout the Mamluk period in Jerusalem, Tripoli, and Damascus (the latter served as a control group).[138] The *waqfs* have been classified into two main benefactor groups: governmental and private. Another line charts all the endowment buildings, regardless of the founder's identity.

My analysis of trust activity in Jerusalem also covers the Ayyūbid era, for the institutions that were endowed during this period constitute fine examples of how this mechanism enabled the regime to promulgate policy.

[135] Ibid. For Weber's argument concerning patrimonialism, see idem, *Economy and Society*, vol. 2, chapter 12.

[136] Al-Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, vol. 2, 537–542. He enthusiastically describes not only the sultan's initiatives, but how they were followed up by his amirs.

[137] For example, Sultan Barqūq sought to cut back on the number of endowments; see Harmaan, "Mamluk Endowment," 34.

[138] The data from Damascus were harvested mainly from Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, appendices A and B.

Following the expulsion of the Franks, Saladin launched an Islamization project in Jerusalem that included various institutions held in trust. The city's aggregate activity line, both governmental and private, shows that endowments hit a peak in the mid-fourteenth century during the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn.[139] At the time, an economic boom merged with a relatively peaceful spell and an able ruler to form what is generally considered the golden age of the sultanate. Another small increase is registered in the mid-fifteenth century, whereas the late fourteenth century and the tail end of the fifteenth century are characterized by dips. Whereas the aggregate line is somewhat misleading, examining the governmental and private activity in tandem reveals a more nuanced picture. The government line clearly shows that the mid-fourteenth century was the height of endowment enterprise. Moreover, the data from Jerusalem at the time of Sultan Barqūq (1382–1389 and 1380–1399) dovetail neatly with the decline that Haarman pointed to in foundation projects in Egypt during Barqūq's tenure.[140] That said, the line charting private endowments tells a different story. In the mid-1300s, immediately following the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, there was a sharp decline in governmental activity but a concomitant spike in private trusts. The same holds true, albeit on a much smaller scale, for the early 1400s. In contrast, the volume of foundation projects of all stripes was relatively steady throughout the fifteenth century. These occasionally sharp differences between private and public endowment activities suggest that there was a strong inverse relationship between these fluctuations: when the patrimonial state shirked its duties, the *awqāf* and local residents picked up the slack.

For the most part, the activity level in Tripoli confirms the main trends that were found in Jerusalem. Although the latter attracted more charitable trusts due to its religious importance, this did not have a dramatic impact on the big picture. Following the completion of "new Tripoli" in the early fourteenth century, there was a sharp decline in endowment-funded construction. Similar to the period following the capture of Jerusalem, the heavy use of *waqfs* by the state was part of its efforts to populate the relocated city with Muslims. The subsequent fall-off in Tripolitan activity at around 1320 might have stemmed from the general unrest at the time,

[139] Surely, the most expansive discussion of this formative and crucial transition period of the sultanate is A. Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, 1310–1341* (Leiden, 1995).

[140] Harmaan, "Mamluk Endowments," 34.

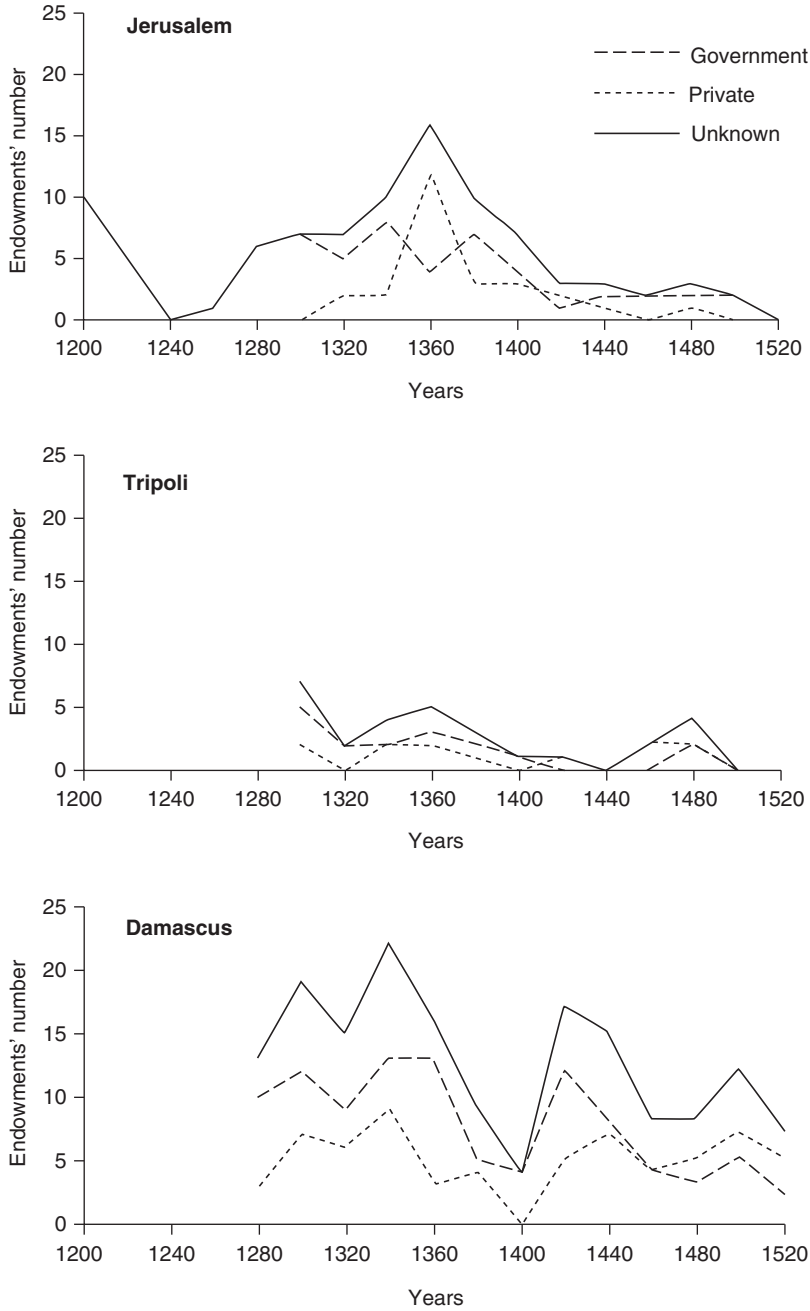


FIGURE 5.1. Urban endowment activity (by city)

which subsided during the third reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1309–1341).[141] By the mid-fourteenth century, there is a steady decline in foundation projects. However, a conspicuous anomaly turns up at around 1480; this upswing coincides with the tenure of al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāītbāy (1468–1486), one of the last competent sultans. As the state relinquished its civic duties throughout most of the fifteenth century, there was a relative increase in private *waqf* activity. Like their counterparts in Jerusalem, private individuals picked up the government's slack in the urban sphere (Figure 5.1).

A similar picture emerges from Damascus, albeit with some local variants. Once again, al-Malik al-Nāṣir's reign constituted the high point of state activity. The glaring drop off circa 1320 is probably also reflective of the just mentioned discord. In addition, most of the movement along the Damascene curve throughout the majority of the 1400s and the early sixteenth century is commensurate with the fluctuations in the other two cities. The major difference between Damascus and its two neighbors turns up at around 1400. Unlike the general slide in foundation activities in Jerusalem and Tripoli, the provincial capital enjoyed a sharp surge in government-sponsored endowments. The most likely reason for this discrepancy is Timūr's sack of Damascus in 803/1401.[142] Upon returning to the city, the Mamluks embarked on a major rebuilding program, which peaked at around 1420.

This comparison reveals that each of the cities followed the same basic trends, whereas most of the discrepancies were probably the result of local events. Above all, it appears as though the sultan's perception of his role fostered a general atmosphere that steered his subordinates' own endowment activities in a certain direction. As the graphs demonstrate, the Mamluks generally parroted their leader's building inclinations. During periods of dramatic political change, especially the capture of a city, the leadership turned to *waqfs* as an efficient means to advance a policy and leave their mark on the urban landscape. In other words, this comparison demonstrates that endowments facilitated certain administrative plans. A case in point was the reurbanization of Tripoli. Once the sultans initiated marquee projects, amirs followed in their footsteps, establishing charitable trusts that served as the cornerstones of new areas. Moreover, these

[141] R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 85–104.

[142] N. Elisséeff, "Dimashq," *EI*^{2} 2: 287–288. Among the important compounds that were damaged was the Great Mosque and *Dār al-Saʿāda* (the Palace of Felicity).

institutions provided the city with indispensable urban infrastructure and facilities.[143] Finally, the changes over the course of the period in question and the differences between the various sultans imply that the Mamluks' approach to endowments was in constant flux.

Appearances aside, we have thus far established that the Mamluks were not operating in a random fashion on the urban landscape. In order to paint a more detailed picture of the areas of activity and the influence of both the state and private individuals, I have sorted the endowments in Jerusalem and Tripoli into four main categories: religion, education, economy, and miscellaneous.

Compared to educational institutions, the state was not heavily involved in the construction of purely religious buildings, such as mosques and *zāwiya*, in Jerusalem. This undoubtedly stemmed from the prominence of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf because it would have been futile for any leader to try to challenge its symbolic status with a rival prayer compound. On the other hand, Mamluk officials played a dominant role in the construction of *madrasas*. These data are consistent with their strategy throughout *al-Shām*.[144] By sponsoring educational facilities, the Mamluks formed and solidified relations with the learned urban elite (*'ulamā'*). More specifically, the new *madrasas* created more positions for the local "intelligentsia," thereby improving their income and quality of life.[145] By accepting these posts, the educated elite tacitly agreed to serve as mediators between the ruling class and the local population, which in turn bolstered the legitimacy of the Mamluks.[146]

In Tripoli, much like in Jerusalem, the Mamluks' contribution to the establishment of religious buildings was relatively modest (Figure 5.2).[147] Although the leadership played a key role in the establishment of the Friday mosques during the new city's fledgling stages, it was local residents who initiated the construction of small community mosques in different

[143] Luz, "Tripoli Reinvented."

[144] J. Berkey underscores the morphological results of the Mamluks' need for legitimacy among the learned urban class, namely, the construction of educational compounds; idem, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo. A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, 1992), 17–20.

[145] Lapidus expands on this issue in *Muslim Cities*, 135–141; also see idem, "Muslim Urban Society in Mamlūk Syria," in A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), 195–205.

[146] The topic of leaders attempting to improve their bona fides by sponsoring construction projects is discussed in Chapter 6.

[147] Although some scholars would argue that a *madrasa* is just as religious an institution as a mosque, in this particular context "religious buildings" refer to houses of prayer.

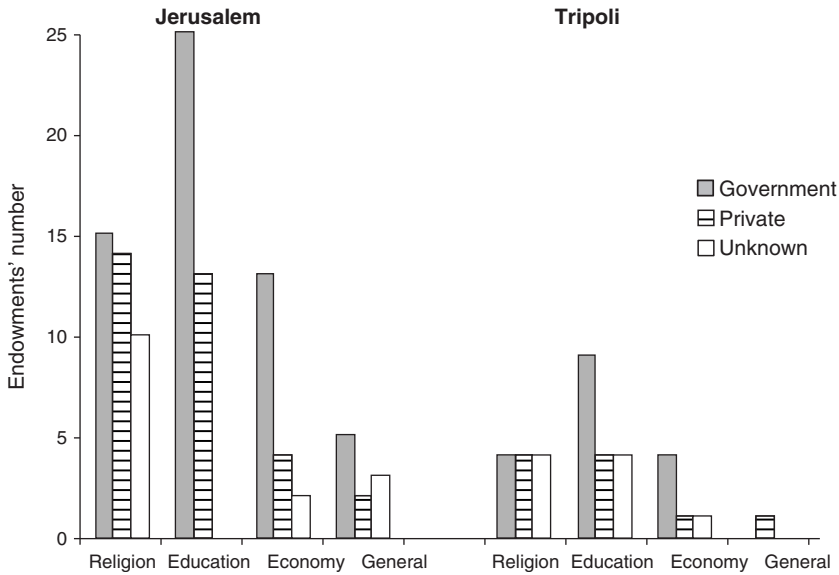


FIGURE 5.2. Differential endowments' activity

neighborhoods throughout Tripoli. The Mamluks' impact on the Tripolitan economy was also on a par with their sway in Jerusalem because the vast majority of public buildings, markets, and *madrasas* were under the auspices of *waqfs* that were founded by Mamluk officials.

The numerous endowments that were sponsored by government officials reinforced the presence of the Mamluk state in the daily life of its subjects. More specifically, it enabled the sultanate to directly influence the urban landscape and implement its policies throughout the region. Although the founding of a *waqf* fell under the legal heading of a private and voluntary act, the data from the cities of *al-Shām* point to a robust centralized impetus. Put differently, these individual acts were part of a larger framework that was in lockstep with the reigning sultan's overarching vision.

In summing up this chapter, I would like to turn our attention back to Stern's earlier remarks concerning the lack of institutions in the "Islamic city" *vis-à-vis* its European counterpart. My research on the role of endowments in Syrian urban communities suggests that Mamluk society found its own ways to establish and maintain its infrastructures. The mechanisms

employed were a direct result of Mamluk sociocultural norms. It is within this context that *waqfs* became a dominant factor in the running, upkeep, and development of cities. Like any system, charitable trusts are far from perfect. In times of economic crisis (be they general recessions or unforeseen events that hit a specific institution), some endowments completely fell apart and others required an adjustment or reform to stay afloat. In addition, there were legal and administrative lacunae in the trusts' various fields of operation.[148] Nevertheless, endowments were a central factor in urban daily life throughout the Mamluk era.[149] The proliferation of *waqfs* and their institutions' prominence in the public expanse suggest that there was an implicit policy discourse between the sultan and other elite members of Mamluk society. This ongoing discourse and the fact that rulers sponsored a large number of endowed mosques and other public buildings out of their own personal funds, rather than simply using state revenues, forged a bond of shared values between the sultanate and its subjects that stands in stark contradistinction to alienated despotic approaches to governance. However, given the blurred and constantly shifting border between the public and private spheres in Muslim-majority societies, it is seldom easy to discern the rulers' urban policies or gauge their contributions to the city landscape.

[148] Raymond, "Les grand *waqf*s."

[149] As part of her analysis of the Cairene *waqf*, Denoix tracks the functional changes it underwent through the ages. Toward the end of the Mamluk period, endowments were no longer used as a tool to shape the city's fabric. Instead, they served as mere cash cows for the upkeep of religious buildings. As a result, the *waqf* apparently lost its multifunctional character during the Ottoman period. See S. Denoix, "A Mamluk Institution for Urbanization: The Waqf," in D. Behernes-Abouseif (ed.), *The Cairo Heritage. Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim* (Cairo, 2000), 191–202.

6

Icons of Power and Expressions of Religious Piety

The Politics of Mamluk Patronage

This chapter analyzes the ways in which the Mamluks' patrimonial state unceasing need for legitimacy came to expression in the city landscape. In this context, I delve into the connections among authority, legitimacy, and monumental buildings by engaging in a semiotic reading of the built environment of *al-Shām*'s provincial cities. My findings clearly demonstrate that among the Mamluk's various tactics for conveying messages to their urban constituency was a highly specific architectonic vocabulary that was primarily communicated through the '*ulamā*' (the learned strata of Islamic society).

Pre-modern and preindustrial societies were usually dominated by a small class of elites. In addition to possessing a disproportionate share of the wealth and controlling most of the public resources, members of this class presided over most of the key institutions and occupied the majority of senior public posts. How did these fortunate few hang on to the mantle of power? How did they legitimize their rule and authority? Although this naturally required sheer power and brute force, Antonio Gramsci argued that hegemony cannot rest solely on or be sustained over the long run by the exertion of power, such as duress.[1] Even in the most draconian regimes, a modicum of legitimacy and consent is essential to the stability and durability of the elite.

How, then, does the ruling class transform its power into authority and acquire legitimacy? Authority exists when people grant a certain group the right to control their lives. In contrast to power, which involves using

[1] For a disquisition on the roots of political and cultural hegemony, see A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (eds. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith) (London, 1971).

coercion to secure a dominant position, authority can only be maintained if the governed accept the leadership's hegemony. Max Weber's seminal work, *Economy and Society*, offers critical insight into the roots of legitimacy and authority. Weber was primarily concerned with the ways in which political, military, or religious power is translated into legitimacy. The longer an elite group exercises power, the greater the need for justification, and this is achieved by turning to various forms of legitimation. He defines three means for legitimizing power: a system of rational rules, personal authority or traditionalism, and charisma.[2] The implementation of any of these means may vary from one system to the next, but, according to Weber, they form the basis of authority and for legitimizing power.

Gideon Sjoeberg develops Weber's theory further by suggesting the following primary modes for rationally justifying the suzerainty of one group (or person) over the rest:[3]

1. The appeal to the absolutes.
2. The appeal to tradition.
3. The appeal to the experts.
4. The appeal to the governed.

"The appeal to the absolutes," which was a staple of pre-modern societies, is underpinned by forces that are independent of human action. More specifically, the leadership claims that its rule is divinely sanctioned (the will of *god*) or conforms to natural law. "The appeal to tradition" is closely interwoven with and usually complements the first appeal. Tradition in pre-modern societies was predicated on an accepted set of norms and rules (or natural law). For example, Muslim law (*Shari'a*) was initially formulated on the basis of the Quran (appeal to the absolute) and subsequently buttressed by the *Sunna*, that is, the commonly accepted code of practice (appeal to tradition). In modern societies, Sjoeberg posits that it is incumbent upon the elites to "appeal to the experts," especially in industrial or technically oriented societies. Last, modern-day rulers, according to Sjoeberg, make their case before the citizens by means of propaganda, which they transmit through the mass media.

The study's findings suggest that the Mamluk authorities availed themselves of all four of Sjoeberg's principles. In my estimation, even those principles that Sjoeberg ascribed to contemporary elites were used by the Mamluks. In this chapter, I support this position with evidence from the

[2] Weber, *Economy and Society* 3, 952–954.
[3] Sjoeberg, *The Preindustrial City*, 221–224.

landscape of Mamluk cities. In fact, the landscape and the changes that were wrought on the urban scene during the period in question shed light on the steps the Mamluk elite took to maintain their sway and bolster their legitimacy among the local populace.

Like any ruling elite, it was incumbent upon the Mamluks to constantly sustain and legitimize their hegemony, but they were forced to contend with several unique problems. As ex-slaves who descended, by and large, from various Turkish tribes, the Mamluks could not point to a distinguished lineage. Moreover, they were ethnically, linguistically, and culturally different from the communities they governed. In consequence, much of the populace was suspicious of them. Therefore, the main justification for the Mamluks' authority over their dominions was their military prowess, including the ability to keep the enemies of Islam at bay.[4] Mamluk society's unique social structure posed even graver challenges to the perpetuation of the elite's rule. The sons of Mamluks were generally prohibited from inheriting their parents' post or so much as holding jobs within the administration. To mitigate the effects of these restrictions and steer their way through the empire's tempestuous political waters, members of the Mamluk aristocracy (sultans included) were heavily involved in the founding of endowments and public buildings.

Chapter 5 discussed the importance of the *waqf* and its far-reaching impact on the city, but the monumental construction projects and other changes that the Mamluk elite introduced to the urban landscape can also be read on a deeper level. In any environmental setting, the different objects that exist serve as the components of manifold yet interrelated semiotic systems.[5] The built environment is a language that transforms objectives, desires, and ideals into concrete objects that bear the meanings their builders conferred on them. The question of meaning is surely one of the most complex (and controversial) issues in any philosophical discussion.[6]

[4] R. Kruk, "History and Apocalypse: Ibn al-Nafis's Justification of Mamluk Rule," *Der Islam* 72 (1995), 324–337; R. Amitai, "The Mamluk Institution: 1,000 Years of Military Slavery in the Islamic World," in P. Morgan and C. Brown (eds.), *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2006), 59. n. 84; A. F. Broadbridge "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn," *MSR* 5 (2001): 91–117; and idem, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 1–5. Broadbridge focuses on the relations between the Mamluks and religious scholars in ibid., 12–16.

[5] D. Presziosi, *The Semiotics of the Built Environment: An Introduction to Architectonic Analysis* (Bloomington, 1979), 1.

[6] Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 70–78. Humphreys was the first to seriously examine intentions and meanings in Mamluk architecture.

Likewise, meaning in architecture or the built environment is an intricate and multifaceted subject that touches on the field of semiotics. Christian Norberg-Schultz proposed that it is the beholder that endows objects with their represented quality.[7] Put differently, the manner in which observers grasp objects is strongly connected to their experience and enculturation.[8] Norberg-Schultz suggested that objects are perceived along a spectrum from mere physical entities to metaphysical and symbolic structures. With this in mind, the present reading of Mamluk institutions and monuments – or what I refer to as "icons on the cultural landscape" – involves comprehending objects as symbols and metaphors of human action.[9] In other words, the interpreter advances from a functional perception of objects (as infrastructure or part of a practical system) to a highly symbolic and metaphysical level of understanding.

Against this backdrop, we shall delve into the semiotics of Mamluk construction activity, inter alia, in the cities of *al-Shām*. The focus and underlying assumption of this chapter is that, aside from practical and private motives, the elite established buildings as part of their relentless efforts to bolster their legitimacy among their various constituents. Against this backdrop, I discuss the symbolic and ideological dimension of public and monumental buildings and offer a critical analysis of the Mamluk elite's activities and impact on the Syrian urban landscape.

THE CITADEL: AUTHORITY, LEGITIMACY, AND HEGEMONY

Al-Ẓāhirī (d. 1468) mentions at least fifty-six cities in his account of *Bilād al-Shām*.[10] Although the Mamluks only built or repaired the walls of ten Syrian cities, they erected citadels (al-Qalʿa) in no fewer than thirty-four. What is more, the historical record shows that sultans and provincial governors repeatedly took a special interest in citadels. This evidence attests to the fact that the citadel was indeed a lynchpin of the Mamluks' fortification policy.

[7] C. Norberg-Schultz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Oslo, 1965), 27–40.

[8] On the subjective and reflexive quality of understanding the landscape and perceptions of place, see Y. Tuan, *Topophilia. A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974).

[9] For more on the concept of landscape as a metaphor to live by, see Mitchell, *Cultural Geography*, 120–144. For more on landscape contextualized see Chapter 7.

[10] Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, *Kitāb Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik* (ed. P. Ravaisse) (Paris, 1894), 41–49.

After wresting Safad away from the Franks in 1266, Sultan Baybars personally oversaw the construction of a gargantuan fortress on the site of the town's Crusader citadel. The Sultan not only supervised the project in person, but was actively involved in the building process itself.[11] If we are to trust the chronicles, Baybars worked shoulder-to-shoulder with his soldiers carrying military equipment into the fortress' armory (*zardā-khana*), helped the masons haul large stones, and cleaned the moat that was ruined during the Mamluk siege.[12] After completing the initial repairs, Baybars allocated a monthly sum of 80,000 dirhams to continue the job. Perched atop the highest topographical point in the immediate vicinity, the fortress loomed over the reestablished city and served as its main point of reference. From that point, Safad's residential areas developed around (initially due south and east) the citadel.[13]

The Mamluk conquest of Tripoli led to the demolition of the coastal town, which was subsequently rebuilt some four kilometers inland.[14] The new city's most prominent edifice was indeed the citadel. Located on the site of a Crusader fortress, the Mamluk version was renovated by Amir Asandamur al-Kurjī al-Manṣūrī during his tenure as Tripoli's governor from 1300 to 1307.[15] The building's location on the highest point overlooking the city and its heavy fortifications gave the secluded citadel its ominous mien.

In 710 (1310), Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥmmad ibn Qalāwūn issued a decree instructing the local governor to repair the citadel of Jerusalem.[16] Unlike Safad and Tripoli's citadels, the Jerusalem fortress did not enjoy such a domineering topographical location. Nevertheless, it was cut off from the rest of the city by high walls and a moat, which sufficed to turn the Jerusalem citadel into an impregnable, isolated, and awe-inspiring edifice.[17]

Under the Ayyūbids, and certainly under the Mamluks, the citadel indeed became an indispensable part of urban defence systems.[18] Al-Ẓāhirī's above-mentioned list clearly demonstrates that many Syrian cities possessed

[11] Ibn Shaddād, *Tar'īkh*, 353. Also, al-Maqrizī, *Sulūq* 1, 548.
[12] Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'īkh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulūk* 2, 128. Also, al-Maqrizī, *Sulūq* 1, 558.
[13] At least one of Safad's residents at that time placed great import on the citadel; see, Lewis, "An Arabic Account of Safad," 477–488.
[14] Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'īkh* 8:80–81; al-Maqrizī, *Sulūk* 1, 748.
[15] al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'ashā* 4, 148.
[16] CIA, 2/2, 142.
[17] Al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣar*, 138.
[18] J. L. Bacharach, "Administrative Complexes, Palaces, and Citadels: Changes in the Loci of Medieval Muslim Rule," in I. A. Bierman et al. (eds.), *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order* (New York, 1991), 111–128.

this sort of fortress. Needless to say, this phenomenon extended far beyond the boundaries of *al-Shām*. Naser Rabbat closely tracks the changes to the Citadel of Cairo, from its establishment under Saladin to its high point under al-Malik al-Nāsir Muḥmmad ibn Qalāwūn.[19] According to Rabbat, the citadel was commonplace in Anatolia, Syria, the Jazira, and surely Egypt from as early as the eleventh or twelfth century.[20] It clearly assumed a prominent role in the emergent Mamluk architectural style and culture[21] because these fortresses turn up in cities throughout the lands of Syria. As we will soon see, the citadel was more than just a means of protection.

Bacharach considers the citadel's physical separation from the rest of the city to be a genuine manifestation of the Turkish elite's aloofness vis-à-vis the local population.[22] Although the citadel's prevalence throughout *al-Shām* undoubtedly stemmed from the growing Turkish influence therein, I would like to explore its symbolism against the backdrop of the built environment of Syrian cities. How are we to interpret the meaning of the citadel within the urban context? Above and beyond its functionality, what was the message that the Mamluks were trying to convey? Needless to say, an urban landmark that is either separated by walls and a moat or located at a distance from the rest of the settlement is bound to elicit a modicum of detachment and alienation. Yet it appears as though the message the Mamluks sought to transmit by means of the citadel was more nuanced. When rulers wish to completely partition themselves from the masses, they sequester themselves behind an exceedingly hierarchic and regulatory framework that entails a litany of barriers aimed at preventing any and all contact – be it visual or audible – between the sovereign and the governed. The Round City of Baghdad (Madīnat al-Salām) constitutes a case in point.[23] A pedestrian hoping to enter the Round City was forced to contend with the Abbasid caliph's sentries. The

[19] N. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo. A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, New York, Koln, 1995).

[20] Ibid., 284.

[21] The emergence of a distinct Mamluk culture in Egypt and Syria, as manifested in architecture and art, still demands further research. In navigating this relatively uncharted terrain, I follow in the footsteps of, above all, Doris Beherens-Abouseif and Nasser Rabbat's analysis of the "Mamluk architectural zeal"; D. Behrens-Abousief, *Cairo of the Mamluks*; and N. O. Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture. Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (London, New York, 2010).

[22] Bacharach, "Administrative Complexes, Palaces, and Citadels."

[23] A reading of the plan of Baghdad, J. Lassner, "The Caliph's Personal Domain. The City Plan of Baghdad Re-examined," in A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City. A Colloquium* (Oxford, 1970), 103–118.

further an individual proceeds, the more inspections and check points. In fact, the very right to enter the inner circles was a sign of court prestige. In any event, the Mamluks eschewed this sort of morphology in *al-Shām*; although the gates of the citadel were heavily secured, citizens were not banned from entering the compound.

Sultan Baybars's hands-on approach to the renovation of the Safad citadel clearly indicates that the structure's importance was not limited to the military sphere. The messages that his involvement conveyed were directed both internally and externally. Like other Mamluk sultans, Baybars was under the constant internal scrutiny of his fellow officers and was preoccupied with his standing relative to the other members of the high command.[24] From this standpoint, renovating the citadel and actively participating in the work delivered important messages: Baybars's commitment to his fellow Mamluks, his intention to press on with the military campaign (*jihād*) against the Crusader kingdom, and his status as "the first among equals" vis-à-vis the rest of the senior military brass.[25] Conversely, the citadel also had another targeted audience in mind – it unambiguously informed the local populace that, in his capacity as the champion of Islam, the sultan was committed to pursuing the *jihād* against the Franks and protecting the faithful against the powerful Mongols in northern Syria. At the summit and heart of the citadel and the entire settlement, Baybars commissioned a tower to be named in his honor – majdal al-Ẓāhir.[26] It stands to reason that this most prominent edifice was not built solely for functional purposes but constituted a physical manifestation of Baybars's position as the head of the Mamluk sultanate. The tower was an icon of power that expressed the sultan's dedication to the military tasks at hand, as well as his standing as a just, pious, and genuine leader.

Jerusalem's citadel was renovated in 710/1310 as per the decree of the enthusiastic builder Sultan al-Malik al-Nāsir Muḥmmad ibn Qalāwūn.[27]

[24] Y. Frenkel, "Public Projection of Power in Mamluk *Bilād al-Shām*," *MSR* 11/1 (2007): 39–40.

[25] P. M. Holt, "The Sultan as an Ideal Ruler: Ayyubid and Mamluk Prototypes," in M. Kunt and C. Woodhead (eds.), *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age* (London and New York, 1995), 122–137.

[26] Lewis, "Account of Safad," 487. In this account, a native of Safad, al-Uthmānī, praises Baybars's building enterprise and describes the tower as an architectural gem.

[27] Berchem, *Matériaux* 2/2, 142, n. 1. His construction zeal was complemented and implemented in Jerusalem by the governor of Syria, amīr Tankiz al-Nāṣirī. On this enthusiastic builder see E. V. Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nasiri* (Chicago, 2009).

During his tenure (1310–1341), Jerusalem was awash in construction projects, and the same could be said for Cairo, albeit on a much larger scale.[28] The Citadel of Cairo, al-Malik al-Nāsir's most ambitious project, epitomized his fervid desire to be seen as a dominant, pious, and just ruler.[29] The inscription commemorating the sultan's reconstruction of the fortress was set on the building's eastern wall – the side facing the city – and the date of the decree was mounted on the wall by the citadel's main entrance, which was used by the local population. In other words, the sultan's targeted audience was the city's residents.

Al-Malik al-Nāsir's decision to renovate the citadel cannot be attributed entirely to security because Jerusalem was an insignificant peripheral city in the grand scheme of Mamluk geopolitics. In his description of Jerusalem, al-ʿUmarī (d. 1349) cast doubt on the citadel's military efficacy: "Its existence or the lack of it makes no difference, as it is completely useless and does not [add] to the defence [of the city]."[30] According to al-ʿUmarī, the complex's renovation was but a quirky act on the part of the sultan, an extravagant yet absolutely useless element on the city's landscape. This is a rather harsh judgment considering the fact that Jerusalem's wall contained sizeable gaps since being intentionally breached by the Ayyubid ruler of Damascus al-Malik al-Mu'aẓẓam ʿIsa in 1219. Consequently, a functioning citadel could not help but improve the porous city defences.

Notwithstanding its faults, al-ʿUmarī's observation broadens our perspective of the citadel. Transcending its tangible military dimension, he astutely recognized that the structure must also be viewed as a manifestation of the sultan's presence in the city. Above and beyond any contribution to the city's security, the citadel's significance rests squarely on the message that it conveyed to Jerusalem's residents. Al-Malik al-Nāsir chose the fortress to serve as a major symbol of his power in one of Islam's holiest cities. In so doing, the Sultan strengthened his bona fides as a pious ruler. Moreover, he enhanced his reputation as a protector of both the local population and the city's special status among all Muslims. At the same time, Al-Malik al-Nāsir made it clear that he was the undisputed ruler of the entire region.

[28] Al-Malik al-Nāsir's presided over a similar building spree in Tripoli; see Appendices A and B.

[29] Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, pp. 187–189. And see pp. 185–190 for a closer analysis of his intentions in these building projects within the citadel.

[30] al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 138.

Another less exalted function of the citadel involved intra-Mamluk power struggles. At times of political strife, the sultan used the citadel to control local governors.[31] In the case of Safad, the post of "first ruler of the castle" (*Nā'ib al-Qal'aa*) was a personal appointment of Sultan Baybars.[32] Aside from shoring up the city's defences, the "first ruler" was also charged with keeping an eye on the municipal governor.[33] To this end, the sultan saw to it that the citadel and its garrison were under his complete control.

It is also worth noting that, during times of war, citadels served as the last stronghold of Mamluk power in their cities. A case in point is the Mongol assault on *al-Shām* in 1300. During this campaign, the Mongols temporarily seized control of Damascus. (At one point, they held the entire region, reaching as far as Gaza.)[34] However, the Mamluk commander of the Damascus citadel managed to hold out over the length of the Mongol occupation.[35] This historical anecdote, which was not a singular episode, attests to the citadel's role as both the tangible and intangible stronghold of the empire's city.

In general, we may conclude that Mamluk sultans used these iconic landmarks to express a two-pronged message: the omnipotence of the central regime and the ruler's commitment to his subjects' safety and to maintaining public order. This, then, explains why so many of these rulers personally intervened in the construction, renovation, and upkeep of these fortresses.

THE FRIDAY MOSQUE: A DEMONSTRATION OF RELIGIOUS PIETY AND AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNED

Since the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, the Friday mosque[36] has arguably been *al-Shām*'s most iconic architectural landmark. In many respects, this prevalent feature, which symbolizes the ascendance of Islam, still looms large on the urban landscape of Syrian cities. That said,

[31] I cannot substantiate this hypothesis through textual evidence. I wish to thank Prof. Reuven Amitai for suggesting this idea.
[32] Ibn Shaddād, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭira* 2, 150.
[33] Drory, "Founding a New Mamlaka," 176.
[34] Abu 'l-Fidā, *Kitab al-Mukhtaṣar* 4, 44.
[35] R. Amitai, "Mongol Raids into Palestine (A.D. 1260 and 1300)," *JRAS* 2 (1987): 273 no. 72, in which he scrutinize the various descriptions of this dramatic event.
[36] In the ensuing discussion, the terms "Friday mosque," "congregational mosque," and "main mosque" are used interchangeably.

with the passage of time, there were vast changes to the structure, architectural style, and various functions of the mosque. The most noticeable change was the existence of multiple congregational mosques in each city, a phenomenon that bears witness to the steady growth of the region's Muslim communities. Moreover, the paradigm for the Friday mosque – a large-scale compound featuring a hypostyle hall and open courtyard – gave way to a wide range of styles. Here, I focus on the correlations among the location, design, and other features of these buildings and the message that the Mamluk founders of these houses of worship (usually sultans and amirs) sought to convey to the populace. Despite the major shifts in the architectural vocabulary, my findings indicate that sultans continued to maintain and renovate Friday mosques. For the most part, though, it was the first wave of sultans who embraced the traditional model of the Friday mosque because they had the greatest need for legitimacy and thus sought to prove that they were devout Muslims. As the empire consolidated its position, Mamluk sultans were more likely to shun traditional plans in favor of new styles.

During the first centuries of Islam, prayers at the Friday mosque were one of the principal signs of urban social cohesiveness. Accordingly, the construction and upkeep of this institution was one of the Islamic state's chief tasks in all that concerned the provision of public cultural space for its subjects. To wit: these mosques became the heart of the new cities that Islamic rulers established and eventually assumed the same lofty position in existing cities as well.[37] In many of the new towns (e.g., Baṣra, Kūfa, Fusṭāṭ, and al-Ramla), the Friday mosque was located smack in the geographical center of town.[38] Furthermore, the governor's resident (*Dār al-Imāra*) was usually adjacent to the main mosque, and a passageway often connected between the two buildings.[39] The juxtaposition between these important state-built institutions engendered a religiopolitical urban center. This expanse was a clear indication that the caliph and his proxies understood their responsibility to and status among the faithful. The earliest congregational mosques in Syria were fashioned along the lines of the

[37] Friday mosques adorned the functional center of newfound towns (known as the Amṣār) and ancient cities, like Aleppo and Damascus. See N. Alsayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (New York, Westport, London, 1991), 43–112.

[38] Al-Ramla is a case in point; see Luz, "Al-Ramla"; and Anjar Dominique-Sourdel, "*La Fondation d'Anjar.*"

[39] In Jerusalem's Umayyad palatial complex to the south of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, one can still see the remains of a passage that tethered the governor's main residence to the *qibla* wall of al-Aqṣā Mosque.

Prophet's house in Madina. As noted, this expansive house plan consists of a hypostyle sanctuary and an outdoor courtyard.[40] Although slated to serve as the center of newfangled communities, the Friday mosque's general characteristics were reminiscent of the common Ḥijāzī abode.[41] During the Umayyad period, the monumental central mosque gradually emerged as the main venue for an array of ceremonies and rituals that marked the caliph's elevated role[42] as both the head of the Muslim state and a prominent religious figure.[43] By the third *hijri* century, the main congregational mosque was no longer the exclusive site of these events; nevertheless, it held on to its standing as "the Islamic city's" most important religious institution.[44]

The Friday mosque's relative decline ushered in a wide range of layouts and designs for mosques in general. Yasser Tabbaa avers that sponsors in Syria were less concerned with building congregational mosques during the Ayyubid period.[45] The diminishing importance of the large-scale Friday mosque largely stemmed from a sufficient inventory of congregational mosques, as well as a shift in the architectural preferences of patrons toward smaller and more specialized institutions.[46] Put differently, the maturation of Islamic communities gave rise to new institutions and building types that were designed to host a wide variety of religious and social activities. For example, in his description of Cairo, al-Maqrizī mentions no fewer than eighty-eight Friday mosques, nineteen small mosques (*masjid*), seventy-four *madrasas*, twenty-one *khānqhās*, twelve *ribāṭs*, twenty-five *zāwiyas*, and a pilgrimage site (*mashad*).[47] The rise of these alternatives also signaled a sharp decline in the main Friday mosque's dominant role and presence on the urban landscape. That said, it did not cease to function

[40] See Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 33–42.

[41] Like its Syrian counterpart, this house type (discussed in Chapter 2) with an inner courtyard was also termed a *dār*.

[42] On the evolution of the mosque during the Umayyad period see, Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 68–73. For an analysis of major Umayyad mosques see, K. A. C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Aldershot, 1989[1958]), 43–90.

[43] J. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine: etude sur les origins architecturales de la mosque et de la basilique* (Paris, 1947), 122–159; cited by Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 82, n. 1.

[44] P. Sanders, *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (New York, 1994), 39–82.

[45] Tabbaa, *Construction of Power and Piety*, 99.

[46] Ibid., 100.

[47] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Al-Mawaʿiz wa-'l-Itibār fi Dhikr al-Khiṭāṭ wa-'l-Athār* 2 (Cairo, n.d.). Cited by O. Grabar, "The Architecture of the Middle Eastern City from Past to Present: The Case of the Mosque," in I. M. Lapidus (ed.), *Middle Eastern Cities* (Los Angeles, London, 1969), 33.

as the principal site for prayers; there were simply more available options. This development was yet another, physical sign that Islamic societies had come of age, as they had indeed involved into highly sophisticated, multi-layered communities.[48] Throughout these nascent stages, the need for an institution at which to hold congregational prayers was filled by both the traditional great mosque and myriad smaller communal houses of worship.[49]

It is against this backdrop that we now examine the construction of mosques in the cities of *al-Shām*. Our primary objective is to decipher the symbolism of pious buildings and the intent of their different builders, not least the Mamluk sultans. During the Mamluk period, the symbolic importance of urban Friday mosques was on the decline. Correspondingly, an elaborate, uniquely Mamluk architectural vocabulary took form that directly contributed to changes in the spatial behavior and preferences of benefactors. Nevertheless, sultans continued to maintain and renovate Friday mosques because they still constituted a potent symbolic means for buttressing their reputations as pious Muslims and legitimate rulers. In pursuing these objectives, the first few leaders of the Mamluk dynasty frequently took advantage of prior building traditions. However, as time passed and initial anxieties subsided, the Mamluk sultans felt confident enough to lessen their grip on the past and embrace new styles.

Immediately after wresting Safad away from the Franks, Sultan Baybars proceeded to construct two mosques: one inside the revamped citadel in the military part of town and the other in a new civilian neighborhood.[50] In other words, he was furnishing the budding city with two religious centers. There is no record, either archaeological or written, of the first mosque's architectural style or plan. Thanks to Shams al-Dīn al-ʿUthmānī,[51] a fourteenth-century judge in Safad, we do know that it was built on the ruins of a Crusader church,[52] which suggests that Baybars sought to portray himself as the bane of the Christians and chief protector of Islam. The other mosque, known as Masjid al-Aḥmar (the Red Mosque),

[48] Ibid.

[49] For more on the complex hierarchy of mosques and the Friday mosque's impact on the urban landscape, see Johansen, "The All Embracing Town." A discussion on the architectural heterogeneity and growing repertoire of mosque types may be found in Hakim, *Arabic-Islamic Cities*, 100–115.

[50] Ibn Shaddād, *Taʿrīikh*, 353.

[51] Shams al-Dīn al-ʿUthmānī is one of the few locals to write an insider's account of Safad. I will analyse this work in Chapter 7.

[52] See Lewis, "Account of Safad," 487.

was situated in the residential suburb, which was rapidly constructed below the renewed citadel. Save for a typically ornate Mamluk façade,[53] the Red Mosque lacked any other distinct features and was only 15 × 15.5 meters in area. Put differently, it had none of the trappings of the classical plan that informed the earlier congregational mosques.[54] In any event, the inscription still gracing the mosque's gate clearly expresses the builder's intentions:

> In the name of Allah the merciful and the compassionate, this blessed mosque was built by the instructions of our lord the Sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir, the most great and magnificent master, the wise, the just, defender of the faith, warrior along the borders, the victorious, supporter of the faith and the world, sultan of Islam and Muslims, slayer of the infidels and the heathens, capitulator of rebels and conspirators, Baybars al-Ṣalāḥī, partner of the commander of the believers, and this in the year four and seventy and six hundred [1276].[55]

This sort of inscription was quite common, and Baybars himself was often depicted in this fashion.[56] However, to fully appreciate the symbolic meaning of these two mosques, we must take stock of his overall impact on Safad. According to Ibn Shaddād, the city owes much of its grandeur to the sultan.[57] It stands to reason that Baybars was interested in creating a new regional center that would support his campaign to finish off the remnants of the Frankish Kingdom, especially its capital in Acre. The sultan was engaged in a concerted effort (like al-Ashraf Khlīl in Tripoli) to equip his urban venture with all the essential amenities and infrastructures. His inclusion of two mosques demonstrates that he was aware of what constitutes a Muslim urban community. The rather modest plan does not detract from the symbolic importance of these mosques. In pursuing these projects, Baybars depicted himself as a dedicated Muslim as well as

[53] As discussed in the preface to my survey of vernacular architecture (Chapter 2), public Mamluk architecture has a very distinctive appearance.

[54] L. E. Mayer, and Y. Pinkerfeld, *Religious Buildings of the Muslims in the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1950), 38–41.

[55] Mayer and Pinkerfeld, *Religious Buildings*, 40; also see Y. Yadin, "Arabic Inscription from Palestine," in *Eretz-Israel. Archeological, Historical and Geographical Studies (In Memory of L. A. Mayer)* 7 (Jerusalem, 1964), 113–114.

[56] See also, L. A. Mayer, "Two inscriptions of Baybars," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 2 (1933): 27–33; D. Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Ṣām. Une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir," *Studia Islamica* 97 (2006): 57–85. Aigle goes as far as to suggest that, symbolically, Baybars wanted to depict himself, among other things, as the new Alexander the Great.

[57] Ibn Shaddād, *Aʿlāq* 3, 150.

an intrepid warrior who enabled his coreligionists in Safad to pursue a devout lifestyle.[58]

With respect to building projects in Jerusalem, all the Mamluk sultans concentrated almost entirely on the upkeep and enhancement of the general vicinity of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf (the Noble Sanctuary), which is deemed to be the third holiest Islamic site in the world. Apart from the one in the citadel, the only other mosque that was erected at a relative distance from the Ḥaram was a humble place of worship in the Christian Quarter.[59] The main reason for this construction policy's longevity would appear to be a matter of "cost efficiency" – building in and around the Noble Sanctuary was simply the best way for a Mamluk ruler to bolster his legitimacy among the masses. The importance of the Ḥaram extended far beyond the Jerusalem city limits because the compound was already revered throughout the Muslim world. Therefore, the public impact and prestige of any mosque outside of the established center paled in comparison to those in the immediate vicinity of this sacred site.

The mosques of Tripoli tell a very different story. No fewer than nine mosques were erected in the newly established Mamluk town, but we focus here on the two that were commissioned by sultans. Unlike the other mosques, which broke from the central courtyard style, the sultans' buildings remained true to the traditional plan.[60] As we shall soon see, this was no mere coincidence.

The first mosque to be built in Tripoli was the Friday mosque. This project was launched by Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl in 1294, and the prayer house, which stands on the ruins of a Crusader church, was completed during the reign of his brother, al-Malik al-Nāṣir, in 1314.[61] Adhering to the main features of the traditional Arab or hypostyle mosque, the building was rectangular and included an ablution facility at the center of an enclosed courtyard.[62] The prayer house's three entrances were, according to Creswell, a Syrian feature that was first implemented "haphazardly in

[58] For a comprehensive discussion on Baybars's efforts to enhance his legitimacy among the populace, see S. A. Jackson, "The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-Aʿazz and the establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamluk Egypt," *JAOS* 115/1 (1995): 52–65.

[59] CIA 2/2, 202, n. 67; this mosque was commissioned by Sultan Qalāwūn.

[60] For a discussion on the history and architecture of these two mosques, see Salam-Leibich, *Tripoli*, 16–28 and 93–100.

[61] RCEA 13, 122–123. Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 49.

[62] For an explication of the origins and early development of mosques, see R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture. Form, Function and Meaning* (Cairo, 2000), 31–128.

the Umayyad mosque of Damascus."[63] The *qibla* wall was part of a covered prayer sanctuary (*masjid* area), whereas the other three sides consisted of *arwīqa* (arcades that lead to an outside area) facing the main courtyard.

A similar plan was implemented at Tripoli's al-Thawba Mosque. Due to its riverside location, the mosque was beset by floods over the years. Although the floods ruined the inscription, Tadmurī claims that the mosque was built during the third tenure of Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir (sometime between 1311 and 1340).[64] Unlike the Friday mosque, this building's prayer hall was covered by a dome. As noted, private builders and even high-ranking Mamluk officials in Tripoli forsook the traditional style. Against this backdrop, the following question begs asking: why did the Mamluk sultans adopt the time-tested Umayyad plan during the first decades of Tripoli's reconstruction? What was the message that they were trying to impart? And why did this style serve their needs?

Finbarr Flood promotes the idea of an architectural revival of the Umayyad style under Sultan Qalāwūn and his heirs.[65] Decorative elements and architectural fashions that were invented and incorporated into key buildings during the Umayyad period were once again featured in Mamluk monumental buildings. For instance, details that originally surfaced at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus or at the Dome of the Rock were integrated into Mamluk buildings that were constructed during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. A specific example of this was the appearance and reinterpretation of Umayyad iconography in sultanic compounds in Mamluk Tripoli. Flood avers that this nostalgic trend and the intensive use of ancient ornamentations in general stemmed from the sultans' dire need to further legitimize their rule, especially during the Qalāwūnid period. By adopting elements from the most venerable Islamic monuments in Syria, the Mamluk leaders hoped to create a direct link between their own regimes and the revered Islamic figures of yesteryear. By drawing on tradition, they sought to present the Mamluk dynasty as a direct continuation of caliphates past. In addition, the very type of institution that a patron chose to sponsor could also convey a certain message. For example, the fact that the first public building in Tripoli was the Friday mosque, rather than the citadel, indicates that al-Ashraf Khalīl was most interested in showcasing his religious fervor. The

[63] K. A. C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt, Ayyūbid and Early Bahrie Period* 1 (Oxford, 1959), 101.

[64] Tadmuri, *Ta'rīkh wa-Athār*, 135–138; also see Salam-Leibich, *Tripoli*, 96–97.

[65] F. B. Flood, "Umayyad Survivals and Mamluk Revivals: Qalāwūnid Architecture and the Great Mosque of Damascus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 57–79.

embryonic phase of Mamluk architecture was thus informed by the rise of an independent and original Mamluk style, on the one hand, and the sultan's utilization of archaic motives, on the other.

During the Mamluk period, the symbolic importance of urban Friday mosques was on the decline. The loss of interest in the hypostyle mosque was probably due to what Grabar describes as "a widening of the social base of architectural patronage."[66] Put simply, there were more builders and patrons involved in urban construction projects during the Mamluk period, as sultans, senior military officers (amirs), Mamluk aristocrats and other wealthy denizens all sponsored religious buildings. What is more, they had a richer selection of architectural styles to choose from.

Correspondingly, an elaborate, uniquely Mamluk architectural vocabulary took form that directly contributed to changes in the benefactors' preferences and thus the urban landscape. This was manifest in the variety of compounds that the dynasty's elite built throughout the region.[67] On the other hand, sultans continued to maintain and renovate "classic" Friday mosques, particularly during the first decades of the Mamluk empire, because these actions still constituted a potent means of bolstering their reputations as pious Muslims and legitimate rulers. However, as time passed and initial anxieties over the Mamluks origins as foreign warriors who converted to Islam subsided, the rulers felt confident enough to loosen their grip on the past and embrace new styles.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AS SYMBOLS OF PIETY: APPEALING TO EXPERTS

In this section, I assay the combined impact and symbolic meaning of religious buildings on the Mamluk urban landscape, with an emphasis on Jerusalem. During the Mamluk period, the number of pious buildings in the Holy City rose sharply. The primary reason for this spike was Jerusalem's revered status in Islamic culture. Although the city had a smaller population and built-up area than Tripoli, it boasted over twice

[66] Grabar, "Mosque," 39. Humphreys agrees with the latter on this point; Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 91.

[67] This trend is rather evident in my analysis of *waqf* compounds in Chapter 5. And, again, it is well worth mentioning in this context Beherens-Abouseif's analysis that presents the naissance, growth, and coming of age of Mamluk architecture and its ample manifestations; ibid., *Cairo of the Mamluks*.

the number of religious buildings.[68] This disparity indicates that Jerusalem was a prime location for patrons. Although each benefactor had his own personal reasons for sponsoring these sort of compounds, they all chose Jerusalem because they clearly understood that "advertising" their piety in the Holy City would yield better results than in other places. Although these buildings obviously filled functional purposes, this analysis concentrates on their intangible value. In other words, we are mostly interested in symbolism and propaganda.

With respect to Jerusalem's Islamic credentials, the importance of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf was unrivaled. This may be deduced from the simple fact that, from the Ayyubid period on, the city's Muslim residential areas developed mainly along the compound's external walls.[69] Moreover, the Ḥaram was the city's most coveted site for potential benefactors. Sultans and other members of the Mamluk aristocracy built either within the Noble Sanctuary itself or as closely to it as possible. This inclination gave rise to a spatial hierarchy that was grounded on proximity to the religious center.

Let us begin with an examination of the layout of religious buildings in Jerusalem. Map 6.1 marks the location of all pious buildings – *madrasas*, *zāwiyas/khānqās*, and *ribāṭs* – in Mamluk Jerusalem. The data were gleaned over the course of my field work in the Old City and was corroborated and complemented by Mujīr al-Dīn's account and other scholarly surveys.[70]

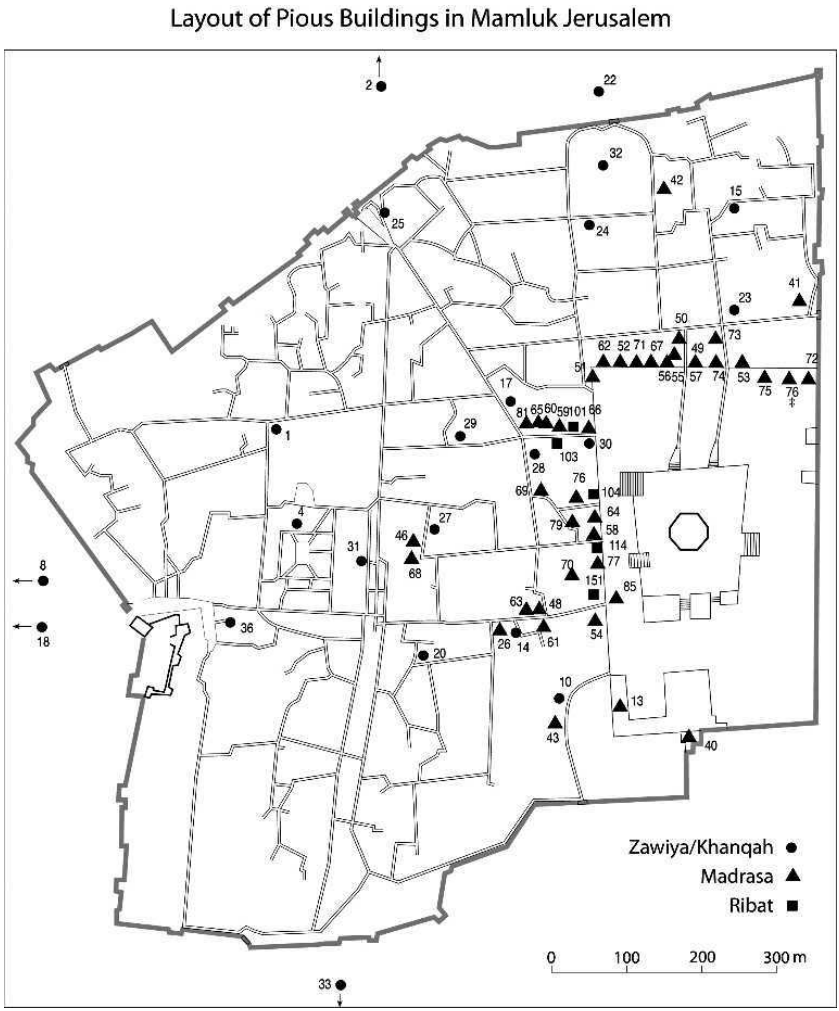
A quick perusal of Map 6.1 allows for a few rudimentary observations. The Ḥaram al-Sharīf indeed constitutes a magnet for the city's mosaic of Islamic pious buildings, with most of them built as closely as possible to the venerated compound. In addition, the overwhelming majority of buildings that were constructed along the streets leading to the Ḥaram were *madrasas*. Conversely, the farther one moves from this expanse, the greater the number of Ṣūfī lodges. Likewise, the Islamic institutions that were built in Jerusalem's predominately non-Muslim areas and outside the city limits (as indicated by the remaining portions of the wall) were *zāwiyas*.[71] This

[68] M. Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture. Regional Architecture Traditions: Evolution and Interrelation," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 163–164.

[69] My survey of Mamluk vernacular architecture (Chapter 2) clearly demonstrates that these areas underwent massive development throughout the Mamluk period.

[70] Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*; D. ʿAli, *Al-Quds fi ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo, 1987); Al-ʿAsali, *Maʿahid*; idem, *Min Aathārina*; and Bahat, *Mamluk Buildings*.

[71] As mentioned earlier, the walls of Jerusalem were intentionally breached during the Ayyubid period and would remain in this state until the Ottoman era.



MAP 6.1 Layout of pious buildings in Jerusalem

alignment was not a product of chance because the location of a particular lot vis-à-vis the Ḥaram was, mentioned, a key factor for any sponsor. In addition to cost, which certainly sent *zāwiya* founders farther away from the choice parts of town, I contend that the specific locations of institutions around the city were directly related to their intended symbolic effect. Although the main targeted audience of *madrasas* was the Islamic

TABLE 6.1 *Pious buildings in Jerusalem*

Location \ Structure	Madrasa		Ṣūfī Lodges (*Zāwiya/Khānqāh*)	
	Mamluks	Private	Mamluks	Private
Adjacent to the Ḥaram	20	4	1	1
Close but not adjacent	9	6	1	5
Distant or outside the city	3	0	4	10
Total	32	10	6	16

community, *zāwiyas* were highly effective tools and prominent landmarks in the ongoing struggle against non-Muslim communities.

Mujīr al-Dīn's description of Jerusalem's main religious buildings attests to the centrality of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in the eyes of the various patrons,[72] but his work also touches on more nuanced phenomena. Mujīr al-Dīn indeed began his account with the Noble Sanctuary before gradually advancing to the city's outer reaches. Table 6.1 consists of all the pious buildings enumerated in Mujīr al-Dīn's account. The chart distinguishes between buildings constructed by members of the Mamluk aristocracy and those commissioned by what I refer to as "private builders." The latter category generally refers to the civilian elite outside the Mamluk network, namely merchants, functionaries, jurists, and other people of means. Last, the table classifies all the buildings according to their location relative to the Ḥaram (as per Mujīr al-Dīn's account of the city).

The vast majority (approximately 92 percent) of the buildings within the inner perimeter (adjacent to the Ḥaram) were *madrasas*, the principal institution of Islamic education.[73] Within the second perimeter (close but not adjacent to), the *madrasas* still outnumbered the Ṣūfī lodges by a ratio of 2.5 to 1. However, once we leave the general vicinity of the Ḥaram, there were four *zāwiyas* for every *madrasa*. The *madrasa* was thus the preferred building type in the revered center of Jerusalem, with about thirty buildings. As is to be expected, the figures show that the linkage between the Noble Sanctuary (the main mosque) and the *madrasas* contributed directly to the builders' spatial preferences.

Table 6.1 offers a general synopsis of the prevalent tendencies among different builders, but it is also worth examining the decisions of sponsors who commissioned both types of buildings. The reestablishment of Islamic

[72] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 33–49.

[73] From its inception, the *madrasa* absorbed much of the educational activities that were once conducted at the mosque; see Makdisi, *Colleges*, 27–30 ff.

rule in Jerusalem following the Battle of Ḥiṭṭin in 1187 was characterized by various acts that can be defined as the Islamization of the city's landscape. Upon entering Jerusalem, Saladin found that the city possessed a strong Christian character. In consequence, the Ayyubid sultan launched an ambitious building enterprise that focused primarily on projects in and around the Ḥaram al Sharīf. As part of this effort, he confiscated Christian buildings and transformed them into Islamic institutions. For example, the St. Anne Monastery, to the immediate north of the Noble Sanctuary, was converted into a *madrasa* (aptly named al-Madrasa al-Salāḥiyya, no. 41 on Map 6.1). He also turned the Latin Patriarch's residence, which was adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, into a Ṣūfī lodge (al-Khānqāh al-Ṣalāḥiyya, no. 4 on the Map 6.1).[74]

The case of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' Ghāzī, a Mamluk amir who built a *madrasa*, a *zāwiya*, and a *ribāt* in Jerusalem in the end of the fourteenth century,[75] is even more intriguing. Little is known of the *ribat*, save for the fact that it was located in an alley off of Ṭarīq al-Silsila, the city's main thoroughfare. Madrasa al-Lu'lu'iyya was constructed in 775/1373, in the Marzubān neighborhood, on the eastern side of the central market (the site of the Roman cardo). Last, he constructed an eponymous *zāwiya* close to the city's northern gate, Bāb al-ʿAmūd. Lu'lu's background is somewhat vague. Burgoyne believes that he was probably a eunuch of little or no consequence within the Mamluk hierarchy.[76] The less desirable location of his buildings (all of which were at a distance from the Ḥaram) indicates that, compared to sultans or high-ranking amirs, Lu'lu' was a man of relatively modest means. That said, even Lu'lu' decided to locate his *madrasa* closer to the Ḥaram than his *zāwiya*. Like Saladin, his preferences were consistent with the preexisting general tendency. Although we have already addressed this question, I would now like to focus on why *madrasas* were built in close proximity to the Ḥaram, whereas *zāwiyas* were scattered around town and gravitated toward non-Muslim neighborhoods.

We can point to three primary characteristics of the *zāwiyas* in Mamluk Jerusalem. First, in contrast to *madrasas*, they were often constructed within residential neighborhoods, usually in buildings that hitherto served as private residences (nos. 10, 14, 23, 25, 28, 29 on Map 6.1 p. 165).

[74] Frenkel, "Political and Social Aspects of Islamic Religious Endowments." See also, *CIA* 2/2, 87–90.

[75] Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 424.

[76] On the basis of the *sijil* documents, Burgoyne suggests that Lu'lu' served under Sultan al-Ashraf Shʿbān ibid.

Second, they were frequently situated in predominantly *dhimmī* (non-Muslim subjects) areas. (nos. 1, 4, 20, 31, 36 in Map 6.1 p. 165). Third, of all the pious buildings in Jerusalem, only *zāwiyas* were constructed outside the city limits (nos. 2, 8, 18, 22, 33 in Map 6.1 p. 165). Unlike the more refined and at times lavish *madrasas*, Ṣūfī centers were exceedingly modest and inexpensive to maintain, so that people of limited means and humble origins could probably have established a *zāwiya*. Even modest compounds, such as the founder's residence, suited the unpretentious characteristics and purposes of the *zāwiya*.[77] This, then, explains why they were built in less desirable areas. But what about the tendency of builders to construct them in close proximity to non-Muslims areas or even within them?

The construction of *zāwiyas* in Christian areas, both urban and rural, is not unique to Mamluk Jerusalem. Previous studies have already established the role of Ṣūfīs as agents of Islamization.[78] A case in point is the abū al-Wafā' family, which founded no fewer than three Ṣūfī centers in and around Jerusalem during the Mamluk period.[79] The family was headed by Shaykh Badr al-Dīn abū al-Wafā' (d. 1253), a Ṣūfī who was held in high esteem by his peers (*quṭb*). Badr al-Dīn relocated his followers to Dayr al-Shaykh, a Christian village some twenty kilometers due west of Jerusalem. In time, the Christian residents were indeed ousted from the town (or converted to Islam). During the tenure of his grandson as head of the *ṭariqa* (order), a new lodge was constructed in the village of Sharafāt, about three kilometers southwest of Jerusalem.[80] The presence of this institution further expedited the Islamization process because the Christian community in this settlement, according to Mujīr al-Dīn, was also forced to leave soon after the Sūfis' arrival.[81] The third center, al-Zāwiya al-Wafā'iyya, was built in Jerusalem circa 782/1380. The compound was situated in a very prestigious location adjacent to the Ḥaram al-Sharīf's wall (no. 30 on Map 6.1 of pious buildings in Jerusalem, p. 165).

Backed by the powers that be (local Mamluk governors in the case of the Abu al-Wafā' family), Ṣūfī orders were usually at the vanguard of efforts to

[77] For example, Zāwiya al-Muḥammadiyya in Jerusalem; see Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 44.

[78] Trimingham explores the role of Ṣūfīs in ethnocultural border regions, such as Anatolia, Inner Asia, and North Africa; idem, *Ṣūfī Orders*, 9. But see also A. Layish, "Waqfs and Ṣūfī Monasteries in the Ottoman Policy of Colonization: Sulṭān Selīm I's Waqf of 1516 in Favour of Dayr al-Asad," *BSOAS* (1987): 61–89; and R. Amitai-Preiss, "Ṣūfīs and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate," *JESHO* 42 (1999): 27–46.

[79] Luz, "Aspects of Islamization."

[80] Ibid, 153, figure 2 for the locations Abū al-Wafā' family ṣūfī centers.

[81] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 147–149.

convert local populations to Islam. This process often entailed forcing Muslims to immigrate to areas with large non-Muslim populations.[82] That said, Saladin's decision to place a Ṣūfī center opposite the Holy Sepulchre Church apparently stemmed from different motives. In all likelihood, the sultan harbored no hopes of winning over souls among the Christian clergy who resided in the city. Moreover, Jerusalem's lay Christian residents were far better off than the destitute Christian communities in Anatolia (once the heartland of the Byzantine Empire) and thus far less susceptible to the lure of apostasy. Similarly, it was unrealistic to assume that pilgrims who stayed in the city for short intervals would "see the light" simply because they were exposed to Ṣūfī activities. In any event, the *zāwiya* opposite the Great Church filled the victorious Ayyūbids intentions of demonstrating his own Islamic piety and adorning the urban landscape with Islamic symbols. What is more, the Ṣūfīs' boisterous practices (certainly when compared to the reserved studious activities in *madrasas*) were the method of choice in a cultural war that was being waged against Christianity and other faiths along the amorphous borders of sectarian strongholds in Jerusalem and beyond. In other words, the unbridled Ṣūfī rituals (e.g., *dhikr* and *samʿā*) served as a provocative and constant reminder, to both Muslim and non-Muslim alike, of the ascendant presence of Islam. Consequently, the sponsorship of a Ṣūfī lodge suited the objectives of any benefactor looking to pronounce his or her devotion and concomitantly take part in Islam's cultural war against its religious opponents.

The analysis of the layout of pious buildings in Jerusalem has revealed a marked tendency on the part of the Mamluk aristocracy to build as closely as possible to the Ḥaram al Sharīf. Five out of every six madrasas within the immediate vicinity of the Noble Sanctuary were indeed commissioned by Mamluk elites, whereas the remaining 17 percent were sponsored by "private" factors. As we move farther away from the center and toward the second perimeter, the elite's majority decreases to 60 percent. Last, there were only three *madrasas* in the furthest zone from the Ḥaram, all of which were sponsored by Mamluk factors. This picture changes dramatically with respect to Ṣūfī lodges. In the closest circle, each of the sponsor groups constructed but a single *zāwiya*. By the second perimeter, the ratio is 5 to 1 in favor of the private sector and 2 to 1 in the outer circumference. Put

[82] For more on the Ṣūfīs' role in conversion and demographic changes, see S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971).

differently, most Ṣūfī centers were built by people who did not belong to the Mamluk aristocracy.

Given its standing as the most prestigious site in Jerusalem, the Ḥaram al-Sharīf and its environs were the most desirable location for members of the Mamluk elite who sought to sponsor building projects in the city. Accordingly, there appears to be a direct correlation between the builder's status within the Mamluk pecking order and the compound's proximity to the Noble Sanctuary. Furthermore, building inside the Ḥaram itself was apparently the exclusive prerogative of sultans. In consequence, the farther one gets from the center, the more the compounds that were built by amirs, low-ranking officials, and "private" patrons. Needless to say, building preferences were also connected to the sponsor's wealth because sultans and senior-level commanders could naturally afford more expensive lots.

Urban landscapes are the sum total of the accumulative construction activities of numerous builders. Although each of the Mamluk-era sponsors had his own motivations and needs, certain general inclinations can be discerned with respect to pious buildings in Jerusalem. For the most part, those patrons who endeavored to enhance their legitimacy or social standing felt that the most effective way of going about this was to establish a *madrasa* next to the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. The ascendancy of Jerusalem's religious center was accentuated every time a pious building was constructed within the immediate vicinity of this expanse. Given the desirability of the land surrounding the Ḥaram, only members of the ruling class had the means and stature to build therein, and this gave rise to a concentric hierarchy around the city's heart: the closer a building was to the Ḥaram, the higher the sponsor's rank within the Mamluk military system and ruling elite. In other words, the building's significance was somewhat commensurate to the benefactor's status within the Mamluk pecking order. The primacy of the main congregational mosque and its substantial influence on urban development has also been documented in Mamluk Tripoli, where the Friday mosque became a focal point around which many other pious buildings (mostly *madrasas*) were constructed. As in Jerusalem, most of the building activity and manufacture of symbols of piety in this consecrated area can be ascribed to members of the Mamluk elite.

Although there were several commonplace reasons for sponsoring a pious or other sort of conspicuous building (such as guaranteeing the financial well-being of one's family by establishing endowments or genuine religious devotion), here I focus on the question of legitimacy. As mentioned earlier, Sjoeberg presents four main tactics for legitimizing and perpetuating authority. In addition to the appeal to the absolutes and

tradition, which we have already elaborated on,[83] Sjoeberg also refers to the appeal to experts and the governed. Although he insists that the appeal to experts only informs modern societies, the Mamluks' extensive symbolic use of pious buildings also enabled them to find favor with society's experts and, through them, with the public at large. More specifically, the construction and ongoing support of *madrasas* constituted a sort of partnership between the Mamluk aristocracy and the most important stratum of Syrian society – the *'ulamā'*.[84] Not only did the *'ulamā'* lay down the social norms, but they also served as mediators between different echelons of society. By virtue of their constant interpretation of the *sharī'a* and dissemination of rulings, the *'ulamā'* were de facto experts through which the Mamluks could establish a dialogue with the governed. The sponsorship of religious institutions was thus a *quid pro quo* whereby the Mamluk administrators provided for the clergy's livelihood in return for public legitimacy; namely, the *'ulamā'* implicitly accepted the rulers' authority by deigning to use their *madrasas* and other pious buildings. By commissioning religious buildings, the Mamluks also demonstrated their own Islamic piety by embracing the same cultural vocabulary as the experts (*'ulamā'*) and the governed (the local Muslim community).[85]

In sum, many of the *'ulamā'* earned a living at religious buildings that were sponsored by the Mamluk elite. Their very employment at "government-funded" institutions implicitly conveyed the message, willy-nilly, that the clergy recognized the authority and piety of the ruling class, and this message would then percolate down to the rest of society. On account of their dignified reputation, the *'ulamā'* constituted the most effective link between the governing elite and their constituency. In their capacity as experts, the *'ulamā'* and the "state-sponsored" buildings where they performed their duties served as "mass media channels" through which the Mamluks appealed to the governed for the purpose of sustaining their legitimacy and preserving their authority.

[83] As noted, the Mamluks adopted these measures by constructing and maintaining mosques.

[84] For an in-depth discussion on the *'ulāma*'s role as mediators between the Mamluks and the local populace, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 107–112 ff. See also, Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 69–90, wherein the importance of learning and religious scholars is heavily debated.

[85] Following Gramsci, one may claim that the decoration of a *madrasa* with a Quranic inscription, for example, should be understood as an appeal to the educated class that is aimed at securing public support without having to resort to coercion. Although this sort of inscription was in all likelihood only comprehensible to literate scholars (even today, it usually takes an expert to decipher these texts), this measure was designed to convey a message to the entire Muslim population.

PART D

THE CONCEPTUALIZED CITY

Part D is dedicated to enhancing our understanding of some of the more intangible aspects of the Mamluk city. In Chapter 7, I explore the ways in which cities were described, scripted, and envisioned by authors and cartographers from various backgrounds. Chapter 8 examines urban social-political interactions through the lens of the public sphere and civil society. More specifically, I extrapolate the nature of the patrimonial Mamluk Sultanate, its cities, and urban communities from documented conflicts between different officials. From this standpoint, the urban expanse is perceived as a setting in which power structures and power relations are reified and conceptualized by stakeholders. This vantage point promises to shed light on the character, scope, potential, restrictions, and limitations of the urban public sphere.

The word "conceptualization" is meant to be taken quite literally: a way of grasping components of reality as elaborate concepts; namely, as explicit representations of objects and the relations between them. Against this backdrop, I attempt to demonstrate how preconceived notions and conceptualized perceptions of the world (i.e., cultural understandings) inform the way people narrate, script, and act within a given space. With this objective in mind, I engage several theoretical terms, foremost among them the (cultural) landscape, the Habermasian public sphere, and civil society.

I would like to conclude these opening remarks by linking what I loosely defined as conceptualization to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus."[1] As a product of history (both personal and social), habitus is an open system

[1] P. Bourdieu and L. J. D. Waquant, *An Invitation to the Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago, 1992), 133.

of dispositions that is constantly exposed to experiences, which reinforce or modify a person's inclinations. It is a blanket term for actions that are triggered by behavioral norms, aesthetics, preferences, and worldviews. In theorizing this term, Bourdieu sought to devise a theoretical approach that is operable in "real-life" experience. Accordingly, his coinage of the term "habitus" was intended to illuminate the social actions of human beings in their capacity as both individuals and members of society. Habitus is the common ground between a synoptic view of communal activity and a dynamic view of the processes through which these activities are actually executed by individuals on specific occasions.[2] It is something that we acquire during our formative years and is surely part of our socialization process – a template that generates strong normative opinions as to what are acceptable and unacceptable forms of social conduct.[3] Within the framework of a particular culture, habitus allows for, but also sets limits on, the creation of all thoughts, ideas, and perceptions, as well as on the consequent actions.[4]

The implications of this contextualization are rather obvious. With respect to the present topic, habitus determines whether or how a travel writer chooses to describe a certain experience, cultural object, or custom, such as the Friday noon prayer. The way people absorb reality – how they experience and then narrate, say, an urban landscape – is invariably influenced by their habitus. This inherent subjectivity need not deter us from endeavoring to "read" the city. Instead, it should serve as a constant reminder of the different cities that can be inferred from the same landscape.

[2] J. L. Lemke, *Textual Politics: Discourse and Social Dynamics* (London, 1995), 33.
[3] J. Friedman, "Place-Making as Project. Habitus and Migration in Transnational Cities," in J. Hillier and E. Rooksby (eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place* (Aldershot UK and Burlington, VT 2002), 317.
[4] P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1990), 55.

7

Cities Scripted, Envisioned, and Perceived

This chapter examines the ways in which the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām* were scripted and narrated by various "storytellers" and "image makers" of the city.[1] In this context, "storyteller" is an umbrella term for local residents, travellers, pilgrims, chroniclers, and cartographers who left us with a narrated legacy of these expanses. I deliberately call them storytellers for the purpose of accentuating their inherent subjectivity. Informed and accurate as some of these narrators may have been, all of their experiences with and accounts of the urban landscape were guided by a personal understanding and habitus. Since every one of these texts is about spatial practices, the argument can be made that they all fall under the heading of travel writing.[2] What is more, any narrative with a spatial dimension (Michel de Certeau would argue that there is no such thing as a narrative without one) is a story that organizes space. Against this backdrop, the objective of this chapter is to discern how people from different cultures and religions, with distinct habituses, comprehended the cities under review. By recognizing the plurality of habituses, we can enhance our understanding of the urban landscape of Mamluk Syria. In sum, the ensuing discussion examines how people from different cultural backgrounds, who were often at cross purposes, narrated the urban landscape of Mamluk Syria.

In a memorial lecture for Charles Beckingham, David Morgan evoked one of this prolific travel literature scholar's more astute observations:

[1] For more on the concept of urban image makers, see K. Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Project* (Oxford, 2001), 141.

[2] M. de Certeau, "Spatial Stories," in A. Ballantyne (ed.), *What Is Architecture?* (New York, 2002), 72–73.

"[T]he study of travel narratives, especially travel narratives about a culture quite different from the traveler's own, can be very revealing, not only about the culture he observed, but about the culture to which he belonged."[3] This insight indeed undergirds my own approach to the Mamluk-era descriptions of Tripoli, Safad, and Jerusalem. Over the course of this chapter, I will examine various accounts (texts) of Mamluk provincial cities in *al-Shām*. These texts will be placed under the scrutiny of the data that I accumulated in my field surveys and the existing literature. In other words, the "conceptualized city" will be compared to the "tangible" one. For the purpose of highlighting the unique impact of each particular author's habitus on his spatial representation, I intentionally present works that were written by people from disparate backgrounds who had appreciably different audiences in mind.

At this juncture, I would like to reiterate some of my concerns about the term "landscape" by drawing on the following excerpt from Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*. In this thought-provoking pièce de résistance, which is set as an interlingual dialogue between Kubilai Khān and Marco Polo, Calvino expounds on the complexities and reflexivity that inhere any urban expanse. The following description of Tamara, a fictional city, epitomizes the problematics involved in reading and depicting the landscape:

> Finally the journey leads to the city of Tamara. You penetrate it along streets thick with signboards jutting from the walls. The eye does not see things but images of things that mean other things. . . . Other signals warn of what is forbidden in a given place (to enter the alley with wagons, to urinate behind the kiosk, to fish with your pole from the bridge) and what is allowed (watering zebras, playing bowls, burning relatives' corpses). . . . If a building has no signboard or figure, its very form and the position it occupies in the city's order suffice to indicate its function: the palace, the prison, the mint, the Pythagorean school, the brothel. . . . Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and all her parts.
>
> However, the city may really be, beneath this thick coating of signs, whatever it may contain or conceal, you leave Tamara without having discovered it. . . .[4]

[3] C. F. Beckingham, "In Search of Ibn Baṭūṭṭa," *Asian Affairs* VIII (1978): 263–277. Cited in D. O. Morgan, "Ibn Baṭūta and the Mongols," *JRAS* 3rd series, 11/1 (April 2001): 1–2, n. 4.

[4] I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. W. Weaver (New York, 1974), 19.

AN INSIDER'S LOOK

All human beings avail themselves of mental maps because as these sorts of images enable us to wend our way through changing geographic settings.[5] Like "real" maps, the mental varieties are mnemonic devices that help us navigate through familiar surroundings on a daily basis by structuring and storing knowledge. Kevin Lynch considers the mental maps of urban dwellers to be cognitive images. In addition to the images of individual residents, Lynch also believes that there is another type:

> There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Such group images are necessary if an individual is to operate successfully within his environment and to cooperate with his fellows. Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which in different environments is more or less compelling, more or less embracing.[6]

Shared urban maps are predicated on mutual cultural perceptions. These images allow urban dwellers to feel relatively sure of themselves as they make their way through streets, neighborhoods, institutions, and public compounds. What is more, they help residents and visitors (e.g., travelers, tourists, and merchants) process a litany of complex variables into a coherent, manageable body of knowledge with which to, inter alia, get from point A to B. Lynch also finds that people use images to connect to places, as well as to communicate and form strong ties with others in their environment. The individual map, in his estimation, conflates with the public one, thereby forming a common memory. Against this backdrop, Lynch has coined two terms that pertain to the skill of reading and experiencing the landscape: imageability and legibility. The first is "the quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer."[7] Legibility is "the ease with which the parts of the cityscape can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern."[8] Throughout this chapter, we will employ Lynch's terminology and findings as part of our effort to shed light on the conceptualization of the provincial towns of Mamluk Syria.

[5] Y. Tuan, "Image and Mental Maps," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65/2 (1975): 209–211.
[6] K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass. 1960), 46.
[7] Lynch, *Image of the City*, 9.
[8] Ibid, 2–3.

How, then, did urban dwellers read the Mamluk city? What were the mental maps that stood at their disposal? What were the images that had been ingrained in their consciousness and sustained their sense of place? As with other source material that pertains to my research topic, detailed accounts of Mamluk Syria's provincial towns are lamentably scarce. However, two compositions by local residents have survived. The first is a text by the Safad native Shams al-Dīn al-ʿUthmānī.[9] The second, which we have already referred to on multiple occasions, is the astonishingly comprehensive work of Mujīr al-Dīn al-ʿUlaymī (d. 928/1522). Both documents offer a rare and intimate look at how the empire's residents viewed their hometowns.

Shams al-Dīn al-ʿUthmānī served as the judge (*qāḍī*) of Safad during the second half of the fourteenth century.[10] The present discussion is concerned with his narration *Ta'rīkh Safad* (the History of Safad), which was probably written sometime between 774/1372 and 778/1376.[11] In the introduction, al-ʿUthmānī promises his readers a comprehensive history of Safad from the Mamluk conquest in 1265 to the events that transpired during his own lifetime. Although this may very well have been his original intention, the extant manuscript contains only ten folios, and most of the text deals with the province's unique qualities, including its villages, agriculture, trade, and geography – not its history.[12] According to al-ʿUthmānī, he endeavors to remove the "veil behind the beauty" of "his" city and province.[13] Needless to say, people often develop a sense of loyalty to their extended place of residence.[14] Therefore, it is only natural that a deep sense of belonging and a burning indignation over the fact that Safad and its environs were mis- and certainly underrepresented were among the principal motivations behind the writing of *Ta'rīkh Safad*. It also bears noting that this book is targeted at the judge's social milieu; namely, people

[9] B. Lewis, "An Arabic Account," 477.

[10] Bernard Lewis, who found this manuscript in the library of Istanbul University, opines that the author was probably al-ʿUthmānī. The manuscript itself is registered as Arabic MS 4525 (henceforth: Lewis, "An Arabic Account of Safad"). At a later phase in his career, the *qāḍī* was transferred to Damascus.

[11] Ibid., 477, n. 3.

[12] Lewis speculates that the work was never completed and these folios are all that al-ʿUthmānī managed to write.

[13] Lewis, "Arabic Account of Safad," 478–479.

[14] N. Lovell, "Introduction," in idem (ed.), *Locality and Belonging* (London and New York, 1998), 1–2.

from a similar religio-scholarly background; or as al-ʿUthmānī' put it himself: "[T]hose who God granted them passion for noble knowledge."[15]

Most of the writer's actual description of Safad is set within the framework of a dialogue between two fictional local residents: the first, the cynic (*baʿḍ ahl al-ẓarf*), harps on the town's shortcomings; his imaginative positive interlocutor who sings its praises. Through these voices, al-ʿUthmānī discloses his urban perception and the central landmarks on his mental map of the Galilean town. According to the al-ʿUthmānī, Safad is a wonderful city, despite the lack of "regular urban planning."[16] Although the book does not spell out what "regular urban planning" consists of, al-ʿUthmānī subsequently provides a smattering of clues. The stout and menacing citadel serves as the focal point and the most iconic landmark of the author's mental map, as the fortress comes up several times in this short document. The way the city soars over its immediate surroundings also draws considerable attention. For example, he recounts a local story according to which the city's name derives from the word *aṣfād* or shackles. This derivation implies that Safad's residents are metaphorically shackled to their homes by the extreme cold of this high-altitude town. Al-ʿUthmānī also elaborates on the *satūrā*, which is apparently a sophisticated device for supplying water to the citadel's reservoir. According to the writer, the *satūrā* is operated by three mounted riders whose circular movement lifts buckets of water to the fortress' main pipe. This supply is primarily intended for the soldiers who are stationed in the citadel, but surplus water is channeled to Safad's civilian areas. The next largest edifice in this account is the Red Mosque, which was built shortly after Safad fell into the hands of Baybars. The mosque's courtyard is depicted as a place of "mercy and grace."[17]

These attractions notwithstanding, al-ʿUthmānī does not suffice with enumerating the city's existing buildings and institutions. For instance, he chastises the community for its lack of a single *madrasa* and for failing to provide any religious education whatsoever. Moreover, he quotes a passage from al-ʿUmarī's work on intermittent water shortages that befell the town, despite the storage system that Sultan Baybars installed. While on the topic, al-ʿUthmānī describes the pathetic conditions of the local bath houses. In addition, he bemoans the fact that houses are clustered into an unmanageable heap and that squares cannot be distinguished from the

[15] Lewis, "Arabic Account of Safad," 479.
[16] Ibid., 480.
[17] Ibid., 481.

streets that merge into them. He pins the dearth of various urban infrastructure and facilities, such as a defensive wall, *ribāṭs*, and *madarasas*, on the lack of generous patrons. This insight harks back to my earlier argument that endowments were the backbone of functioning cities. This statement thus sheds light on how urban communities operated and how their own citizens felt they should be run. To compensate for these cultural-urban shortcomings, al-ʿUthmānī praises the area's natural landscape. For example, he mentions that local residents stroll in the deep gorges and ravines that surround the city, and the town's salubrious qualities, including its fresh air, render it an ideal place to recuperate from sickness.

In summation, al-ʿUthmānī provides a unique balance of commendation and rebuke. Furthermore, his account offers a rare glimpse at how contemporary citizens grasped provincial Mamluk cities, as it is undoubtedly based on a certain reality that the author experienced as a denizen of Safad. Along with the icons that comprise and sustain his mental map or imagery, *The History of Safad* also stands out for what its author omitted. As evidenced by the accounts of Safad that were written by visitors, al-ʿUthmānī left out elements that definitely existed in the city during his lifetime. Perhaps the most salient feature of this account is the author's willingness to highlight the city's inadequacies. This suggests that he had a vision, a notion, indeed, a habitus of what constitutes a city. Through his description of the advantages and shortcomings of his hometown, al-ʿUthmānī articulates a clear vision of urbanism. It is through this vision that he negotiates his criticism of Safad. The writer measures Safad against his own template of a city and builds his description accordingly. The outcome of this process is a highly specific mental map. In any event, he deftly deflects personal responsibility for these critical views by ascribing them to a cynical character. Since the *History of Safad* was apparently dedicated to the province's Mamluk governor, amir ʿAlamdār (in office 774/1372–778/1376), it stands to reason that al-ʿUthmānī was not at liberty to critique the personal shortcomings and apathy of state officials.[18] Besides reporting on the Safad he actually experienced, al-ʿUthmānī paints a portrait of the desired, yet unfulfilled version of his hometown – an imagined landscape that serves as a foil for the imperfect and earthly city he knew.

Unlike his Galilean counterpart, the Jerusalemite Mujīr al-Dīn demonstrates a deep and unabashed local patriotism, which runs like a thread throughout his book. Early on in *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta'rīkh al-Quds*

[18] On ʿAlamdār see, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* 5, 273 and 296.

w-al-Khalīl, the fifteenth-century Ḥanbalī judge states his motivations for this undertaking. Apparently, he set out on this ambitious task of writing a book about Jerusalem[19] because he could not find any existing book that fit the bill.[20] Mujīr al-Dīn's keen interest in the city's Islamic elements and heritage is manifested by the very structure of *al-Uns*. The author starts with a lengthy history of the pre-Mamluk city, which indeed concentrates on its Islamic influences. For instance, he provides an in-depth survey of *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis* (virtues of Jerusalem), a literary genre aimed at bolstering Jerusalem's lofty religious status.[21] Similarly, in Mujīr al-Dīn's exhaustive disquisition on local notables, most of the subjects are pious scholars of Islamic canonical texts. The final part of the book analyzes the urban events that transpired during the judge's lifetime, especially during the reign of Sultan Qāītbāy.[22] At the very outset of the book, he declares that the primary objective of this undertaking is to provide a complete history of Jerusalem and Hebron.[23] Unlike other cities in the region, Mujīr al-Dīn felt that his hometown had yet to receive the scholarly attention it deserved. What was more, he was motivated by the fact that "I have seen people yearning for such a work."[24] This book is arguably the most comprehensive history of the city during the Mamluk period. Mujīr al-Dīn's vast and intimate knowledge of Jerusalem, the abundant sources that he leaned on, and his meticulous approach make this thick tome an invaluable database on the city and other towns in the region.

Jerusalem, according to its native son, was a densely populated city, quaintly nestled between mountains and valleys. Summing up his topographical survey of the city, Mujīr al-Dīn concludes that "The construction of Jerusalem is of the utmost solidity and firmness; all [the buildings] are made of hewn white stone, with no bricks or any wood used in the roofs. Travellers have said that in all kingdoms there is no place more solidly

[19] Although Hebron is included in the title, the attention it receives pales in comparison to Jerusalem.
[20] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 1, 5.
[21] *Faḍā'il* Bayt *al-Maqdis* has received ample attention in the literature. On the importance of this genre to the study of early Islam and Jerusalem in particular, see for example, M. J. Kister, "'You Shall Only Set Out for Three Mosques.' A Study of an Early Tradition," *Le Museon* 82 (1969): 173–96; and also, A. Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1995).
[22] Little also scrutinizes this work in idem, "Mujīr al-Dīn's Vision."
[23] Mujīr al-Dīn, ibid. 1, 4.
[24] Ibid.; ibid., 1, 5.

constructed or more beautiful."[25] This description of the stone roofs is indeed commensurate with the findings of the vernacular survey that I conducted of the city's Mamluk-era structures.[26]

The passage quoted here not only confirms al-Dīn's infatuation with Jerusalem but enhances our understanding of the centrality of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf on the mental map of the city's residents:

> And as for the way Jerusalem is viewed from afar, it is a marvel renowned for its radiance and its fine appearance. . . . If Gods allows an aspiring visitor to reach the noble al-Aqṣā Mosque and the noble Tomb of Abraham, from the moment he sees these glorified places, he will receive so much delight and joy as can scarcely be described, and he will be relieved of hardship and fatigue.[27]

The importance of the Noble Sanctuary also comes across in Mujīr al-Dīn's topographical survey. Focusing on architectural marvels of Islamic religious or pious significance, Mujīr al-Dīn starts out with a detailed portrait of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, which is the hub of the surrounding concentric layers that comprise the rest of this survey. The description follows in concentric and growing circles from the Ḥaram to the rest of the city and beyond, of mostly Islamic pious buildings and landmarks. Mujīr al-Dīn's account underpinned my analysis of the symbolism behind Jerusalem's buildings and construction activity in Chapter 6, whereas the emphasis of the present discussion is on what it reveals about his mental map of the city.[28]

Especially relevant to understand his mental map is Mujīr al-Dīn's spatial descriptions of Jerusalem's topography. Not only does his account substantiate Ḥaram al-Sharīf's role as the preeminent religious and spiritual expanse, but also pays tribute to the precinct's centrality in the mental map of the city's Islamic population. As we have seen, the Noble Sanctuary's religious standing lured numerous dignitaries to construct compounds in the vicinity, which were complemented with new gates and streets leading to the sacred area. In turn, the streets surrounding the holy precinct were laced with bustling markets, bath houses, pilgrimage lodges, *madrasas*, and Ṣūfī centers. In light of all the institutions and bustle, this extended area formed the epicenter of the inhabitants' mental map.

[25] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 55. Some of my translations have benefited from Little's rendering; idem, "Mujīr al-Dīn's Vision."

[26] However, as noted in Chapter 3, it stands to reason that not all the city's buildings met these high standards.

[27] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns 2*, 56.

[28] The symbolic and semiotic layout of Jerusalem's pious buildings are examined in Chapter 6.

However, all this applies mostly, if not exclusively, to the Muslim population, as the city's other communities had their own hubs and landmarks. Jerusalem's non-Muslim buildings and areas warrant little attention in *al-Uns*. Mujīr al-Dīn does briefly touch on the existence of about twenty churches, but only mentions a few of them by name. The most conspicuous Christian institution in Mujīr al-Dīn's account is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. However, he refers to it as *Kanisat al-Qumāma* (the Church of the Garbage), thereby distorting one of its real names: *Kanisat al-Qiyāma* (the Church of the Resurrection).[29] This flagrant expression of contempt was hardly a one-time occurrence during the Mamluk era.[30] As the sultanate's power eroded over the course of the fifteenth century, the animosity between sectarian groups took a sharp turn for the worse. This sociopolitical development was punctuated with outbursts of violence.[31] In fact, *al-Uns* is the primary source on the oppression of *dhimmī* communities in Jerusalem.[32] Likewise, Mujīr al-Dīn practically ignores the city's Jewish populace. One of the only references to a Jewish synagogue comes as an aside to Mujīr al-Dīn's recollection of a lingering dispute between the local Muslim and Jewish communities.[33]

The Muslim-dominated east side receives his undivided attention, whereas the entire area west of the city's main boulevard – starting at the present-day Damascus Gate (*Bāb al-ʿAmūd*) and running south up to the Gate of Zion (*Bāb Ṣahyūn*) – constitutes an exceedingly peripheral section of his mental map. His image revolves around Jerusalem's prominent Islamic area. The wide-ranging and highly informative description of Islamic topics (buildings, events, and people) stands in stark contradistinction to the scarcity of data on Christian and Jewish matters. It is quite evident that Mujīr al-Dīn's mental map is inconsistent with the city's "actual" layout during his lifetime. Although the citadel on the western edge of town certainly stands out on Mujīr al-Dīn's map, there is a void between this installation and the nearest cluster of Muslim buildings, most of which are to the east of the main thoroughfare. Lynch refers to these

[29] Ibid., 2, 51.

[30] This denigrating attitude toward this church is frequently echoed in Christian travel accounts. For an in-depth discussion on this topic, see D. R. French, "Pilgrimage, Ritual, and Power Strategies: Felix Fabri's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483," in B. F. Le Beau and M. Mor, Eds., *Pilgrims and Travellers to the Holy Land*, Studies in Jewish Civilization series, vol. 7 (Omaha, 1996), 169–179.

[31] D. P. Little, "Communal Strife in Late Mamluk Jerusalem," *Islamic Law and Society* 6/1 (1999): 69–96.

[32] These incidents are scrutinized in Chapter 8 as part of my discussion of the public sphere.

[33] This episode will be dissected as part of my discussion on the public sphere in Chapter 8.

neglected areas on the urban mental maps of local residents as "edges" – "elements not used or considered as paths by the observer."[34]

The author's cognitive image of Jerusalem is clearly driven by his sociocultural background and predispositions – *habitus* by another name. More specifically, Mujīr al-Dīn's mental map is a product of his educational background as a religious legal scholar and his personal inclinations as a devout Muslim. In other words, the way he reads and narrates the urban landscape is directly influenced by his personal history and upbringing. His reading of the cityscape is organized around prominent, inherently Muslim cultural landmarks. Conversely, the Christians institutions – even the most famous shrines – barely merit a word and have little impact on the way he negotiates the city. Similar to al-ʿUthmānī, it is rather obvious that Mujīr al-Dīn's focus is on Islamic cultural elements and spatial images.

Al-ʿUthmānī and Mujīr al-Dīn indeed belonged to the same learned strata of Syrian urban society. For this reason, the extent to which these two authentic local voices can be considered representatives of the entire Muslim community is far from certain. Drawing on Lynch's hypothesis of a public common cognitive map, I contend that they do fit the bill. Whereas the formidable citadel, the main Friday mosque, and other Muslim elements are showcased in their mental images of the Mamluk city, their sensory and spatial experiences cannot be solely reduced to the landscape's Islamic components. The surrounding environment, external influences, and the unique characteristics of each city are also featured in their intimate description of their respective hometowns. Last but not least, both of these accounts, especially Mujīr al-Dīn's, indicate that there were substantial discrepancies between the authors' mental maps and the existing urban landscape.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES: VISITORS SCRIPTING THE CITY

Yi-Fu Tuan draws a distinction between the complex attitude of the native and the simplistic and at times superficial outlook of the visitor.[35] Whereas the knowledge of the former is born out of years of experience, sensory memories, and intimate acquaintance, the traveler is usually less informed and surely less involved in the city's daily grind. As we shall see, these

[34] Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 47.
[35] Tuan, *Topophilia*, 63.

differences have a significant impact on how both types of observers perceive and describe the city.[36]

Highly detailed accounts of Syrian cities and provinces may be found in *Masālik al-Abṣār*, an encyclopaedic work on the region. Its author, Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), was a Syrian scholar who descended from a prestigious family of bureaucrats but eschewed his preordained career to become a writer. By virtue of its entries on administrative procedures and protocols, his compendium is highly relevant to any discussion on the history of the Mamluk government.[37,38] In Tripoli, al-ʿUmarī was impressed with the unique water system and the fecund agriculture of the surrounding countryside.[39] Within the city itself, he takes note of mosques, *madrasas, zāwiyas*, bath houses, two hospitals, and an elegant defensive wall. Since Mamluk Tripoli was never enclosed by a wall, it appears as though al-ʿUmarī mistakenly believed that the citadel's wall encompassed the entire city. In Safad, he extols Baybars for building such a magnificent citadel.[40] Last, *Masālik al-Abṣār* displays the author's expertise in all that concerns the topography of Jerusalem and its environs. His description of the Ḥaram al-Sahrīf naturally focuses on al-Aqṣā Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Aside from the Noble Sanctuary, he also takes stock of various other leading institutions and prominent buildings. These contain a few of the *madrasas*, central markets, and pilgrimage centers. Moreover, it bears noting that al-ʿUmarī does not ignore the non-Muslim parts of the city. For example, he discusses the importance of the Holy Sepulchre Church to Christians.

Al-ʿUmarī was not a pilgrim or traveler in the ordinary sense of the word. He was a knowledgeable observer who managed to produce his images of cities within a relatively short time span. As a member of a prominent Syrian family who traveled throughout the region as part of his surveys, he was well-versed in the local geography and its urban components. The chronicler's enumeration of manifold Islamic compounds and his strong grasp for their social function indicate that he was

[36] For an in-depth analysis of how tourists gazed at and envisioned Middle-Eastern landscapes, see T. Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988). Also see I. A. Beirman, "Disciplining the Eye: Perceiving Medieval Cairo," in N. Alsayyad, I. E. Bierman, and N. Rabbat (eds.), *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham, 2005), 9–27.

[37] It is worth noting that Little questions the historical relevance of Al-ʿUmarī's compilation. See, Little, *Mamluk Historiography*, 40. Ibid.

[38] I have adopted Little's classification of al-ʿUmarī's work; see Ibid.

[39] Al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 132.

[40] Ibid., 143.

a learned Muslim. It is this background that enabled him to quickly decipher the major elements of the built environments he toured. What is more, unlike Mujīr al-Dīn, he had no reservations about addressing the topic of Christian landmarks. Given his outsider status, al-ʿUmarī was uninhibited by the cultural mores that "censured" the fifteenth-century Jerusalemite's account.

Perhaps the most famous visitor to the region was the fourteenth-century globetrotter Ibn Baṭṭūta (d. 1368 or 1377).[41] In recent years, scholars have increasingly questioned the credibility and provenance of his accounts. For example, there is reason to believe that his material on Palestine was borrowed from thirteenth-century Moroccan traveler Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Abdarī (circa 1289).[42]As was customary among Muslim pilgrims, al-Abdarī visited Jerusalem on his way back from the *ḥajj* to Mecca and Medina.[43] Although the main topic of his account of Jerusalem is its holy sites, the travel writer commences with a general overview. Jerusalem, so he claims, is a large city that would be "difficult to subdue, for it is built of fine-cut stones."[44] "Surrounded by steep ravines," the elevated town stands alone. "The city has no wall," al-Abdarī continues, "nor can it boast fine gardens." There is a large church to which Christian pilgrims set out once a year, "for they believe that Jesus is buried there." Due east of the city there is "a ravine called Wadī Jahannam [literally: Hell]. On one of its banks, there is a much revered church named after Mariam [Mary] as they believe this is the site of her tomb."[45]

In sum, al-Abdarī's narration is highly associative and lacks any internal structure, for there is no logical geographic progression from, say, the outskirts of town to its center. Moreover, as mentioned, he jumps from describing one religious community to another. In light of this, his account is reminiscent of a tourist informally recounting the highlights of his vacation to acquaintances. The Islamic landmarks naturally left the deepest mark on his memoirs; however, in contrast to the works of other Muslim writers, al-Abdarī does refer to sites and customs of other faiths.[46]

[41] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Voyages d'Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, accompagne d'un traduction par C. Defermery et b. R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1893). For an English rendering, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, trans. and selected H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge, 1958–1961).

[42] A. Elad, "The Description of the Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in Palestine: Is it an Original?," *JRAS* 2nd series (1987): 252–276.

[43] M. W. Hoenerbach, "al-Abdarī," *EI*^{2} 1, 96.

[44] Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Abdarī, *Al-Riḥla al-Maghribiyya*, ed. M. al-Fāsī (Rabbat, 1968), 228.

[45] Ibid., 228–234.

[46] But see Frenkel, "Muslim Travellers," 117.

That said, it is precisely these descriptions that betray his ethnocentric bias. A case in point is the above-mentioned contention that, just as Muslims visit the Kaʿba in Mecca at the end of the Islamic year, Christians conduct an annual pilgrimage to their most sacred sanctuary (the Holy Sepulchre)! To wit: on account of his complete ignorance of the Christian faith, he conflates his own rituals with that of the "other."

All told, a growing number of Muslim travelers passed through *Bilād al-Shām* during the Mamluk period,[47] most of whom were interested in Islamic sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites. Accordingly, the vast majority of these pilgrims refrained from visiting, let alone describing, non-Muslim sites and communities. The just cited Muslim travelers' spatial accounts vary according to their authors' personal style, education, and interests. However, it is obvious that these men shared certain cultural traits that allowed them to familiarize themselves, albeit with varying degrees of expertise, with the profusion of local customs, urban landmarks, and institutions they encountered on their peregrinations. Against this backdrop, I now analyze the works of several Christian and Jewish travelers whose interests, itineraries, and behavior, as well as their interpretations of the Syrian landscape, contrasted sharply with that of their Muslim counterparts.

During the Mamluk period, Jerusalem was also a popular pilgrimage destination for Christians and Jews. Quite a few of the non-Muslim travelogues were designed along similar lines: a short survey of the preparations for the journey and the various stopovers in Europe, then a description of the sea voyage to the Syrian or Egyptian coast and the subsequent land trek through the Sinai *or al-Shām* en route to Jerusalem.[48] Like their Muslim counterparts, these writers tended to focus entirely on sites, events, and people that were tied to their own faith. The objective of their pilgrimage was to experience what they had heard and read about the Holy Land time and again in the years that preceded the voyage. In other words, they already had a Christianized mental image of their destination. Consequently, it appears as though they were either reluctant or incapable of allowing the facts on the ground to alter their picture of the East. A case in point is the Russian pilgrim

[47] Y. Frenkel, "Muslim Travellers to *Bilād al-Shām*," in S. Sergeant and M. Wagstaff (eds.), *Travellers in Deserts of the Levant: Voyagers and Visionaries* (Durham, 2001), 110.

[48] E.g., Ludolph von Suchem, "Description of the Holy Land," trans. A. Stewart, *PPTS* 12/3, London 1895.

Archimandrite Agripani, who set out for the Holy Land in the 1370s.[49] By the time of his arrival in Jerusalem, the city had already been under Mamluk control for more than a hundred years (and this after nearly a century of Ayyubid rule). The changes to the built environment since the end of the Crusader period were enormous, as an impressive citadel and scores of luxurious compounds already dotted the city's landscape. However, this transformation seems to have completely escaped the Russian's antennas, as his description focuses on Christian sites, such as monasteries, churches, and stations in the life of Jesus. The only time he so much as alludes to the fact that there are Muslims in the region is when expressing his consternation with a local regulation banning Christians from entering the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.[50]

A similarly myopic view informs the travel diary of Leonardo Frescobaldi, who arrived at the gates of Jerusalem on November 22, 1384. Frescobali's land part of the voyage in the region begins in Egypt and, while in Cairo, the Tuscan pilgrim did make some observations of local praxis. However, by the time he reached the Holy City, Frescobaldi was in such a religious frenzy that all he cared about was Christian content. For instance, upon walking from the Holy Sepulchre toward the Lion Gates, he approaches the Ḥaram al-Sharīf (or what he refers to as the "Temple of Herod"), but all he has to say about this fabled sanctuary is that Christians are prohibited from entering the site. By the time of his visit, this route and, for that matter, all the city's streets were peppered with Mamluk compounds. For example, the First Station of the most celebrated Christian's pilgrims' path in Jerusalem that follows Jesus's "Way of Grief," the Via Dolorosa, was the local governor's residence, yet Frescobaldi simply fails to acknowledge this fact. A tantalizing question is whether, despite falling plainly into their view, these Muslim landmarks and symbols simply failed to register in Christian pilgrims' consciousness, or if they believed that these elements did not merit any space in their travelogues. Walking through these same streets, I ask myself how Frescobaldi could have missed the beautiful *madrasas* or vast Ṣūfī lodges that lined his path. Surely, his tour guide must have burbled something about these buildings, even if he was unfamiliar with their names or history? In any event, Frescobaldi's account contains nothing whatsoever about the Muslim presence in Mamluk Jerusalem, and the same can be said

[49] Y. Raba, *The Land of Israel in Descriptions of Russian Travellers* (Jerusalem, 1987), 73–75 [Hebrew].
[50] Ibid., 91.

for many other Christian-authored works. Instead, the landscape he narrates – the spatial story he tells his readers – is comprised of the items he wanted to see, rather than those he actually saw.

In my estimation, there are two principal reasons behind this phenomenon. The first is a general indifference to local cultures, whereas the second cause revolves around Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Like many other short-term visitors, Frescobaldi could not absorb these buildings simply because his sensory capabilities were not trained to do so. Unfamiliar with local elements of the built environment, he was incapable of reading the messages and symbols that were encoded in the urban landscape. In the Tuscan's eyes, the compounds he walked past were not *madrasas*, *ribāṭs*, or mosques, but big alienating structures that belonged to a foreign culture that was probably of no interest to him. Judging from the content of Christian- and Jewish-authored accounts, the Muslim "image makers" of Jerusalem failed to capture their attention. In all likelihood, Jerusalem's unique hagio-geography transmitted completely different signals to non-Muslim pilgrims. While traveling through the profane areas of Egypt and Syria, some of the Jewish and Christian travel writers did exhibit some curiosity and occasionally even an intellectual interest in their surroundings, but this relative openness to the "other" came to a grinding halt in Jerusalem.[51] The following observation by Giorgi Gucci, one of Frescobaldi's twelve travel companions, bolsters this hypothesis:

> According to what they say they have the hour of the day and night as we do, and all their churches have steeples but not bells; and when the hour comes, a man mounts to the steeple, and that of the principal church of the city begins to shout and to praise God, and so all the others on the other steeples. And so many are they throughout the city that when they all begin to shout, it would seem a riot has broken out in the city. They halt several times and then they begin again; and in that fashion they make known the hour to the people.[52]

Gucci is referring to the minarets of Damascus. Although he picks up on the commotion stirred up by the call of the *mua'ddīn* (announcer of the prayer), it is unclear as to whether he was cognizant of the fact that their chief function is to summon the faithful to prayer and deliberately chose to

[51] Y. Friedman examines the distinctions between sacred and profane conceptions of the Mamluk landscape; idem, "Holy and Profane in the Itineraria of Pilgrims in the Mamluk Period," in J. Drori (ed.), *Palestine in the Mamluk Period* (Jerusalem, 1993), 128–141 [Hebrew].

[52] F. Frescobaldi, G. Gucci, and S. Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (Jerusalem, 1948), 144.

omit this information or if he really assumed that the minaret fills the same role as the belfry.

In summation, these visitors were far from tourists in the modern sense of the word.[53] The objective of their pilgrimage was to experience what they had heard and read about the Holy Land time and again in the years that preceded the voyage. As a result, they already had a Christianized mental image of what lay ahead of them, and most of them were either reluctant or incapable of allowing the facts on the ground to alter their picture of the East.

Similar to their Christian counterparts, Jewish travelers were inclined to write about the conditions of the local Jewish populace. Among the many topics he covers, Ovadia de Bartenura, a distinguished Italian rabbi who traveled to the Levant in approximately 1485, mentions the Jewish community in Safad and a few of its synagogues.[54] He also refers to Jewish graves and other visitation sites in the city and its environs. None of these details, as will be recalled, surfaces in al-ʿUtmānī's description of the same Galilean town.

Moshe Basola, another Italian rabbi, embarked on his own trek to the Levant in 1521. His in-depth account of the region is one of the few sources that refer to the existence of a Jewish community in Tripoli: "[It] is a city blessed with fruits and these days it contains a hundred Jewish householders."[55] Basola also reports on his visit to Safad. According to his estimate, the town's Jewish community consisted of three hundred families – both established residents and new immigrants – and a few synagogues. Although the Mamluks had already been ousted from the region in 1517, it is safe to say that the modest town did not undergo drastic changes in the four years that had elapsed between the Ottoman conquest and the peripatetic rabbi's arrival. Basola is also struck by the imageability of the citadel; however, unlike most of the other travelers, he apprehends the fortress's role as the anchor of the urban development plan: "Safad is a city in the Upper Galilee in the land of Naftali, and there is a strong citadel at the top of the mountain. And the citadel is surrounded by four mountains,

[53] For a discussion on the differences between travelers, tourists, and pilgrims, see C. Rojek and J. Urry, "Transformation of Travel and Theory," in C. Rojek and J. Urry (eds.), *Touring Cultures. Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London and New York, 1997), 1–19.

[54] Ovadia de Bartenura, *The Book of the Ways of Zion* (Pietrekov, 1927), 33 [Hebrew].

[55] A. Yaari, *Travels to the Land of Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1946), 143–146. [Hebrew].

two of them are entirely for the Ishmaelites and in two of them the entire slope is filled with Jewish houses."[56]

I would like to conclude this discussion with a look at the travel diary of one Felix Fabri, a Dominican monk from Ulm who made at least two excursions to the region. During his second trip in 1483, he served as the German interpreter of the father guardian.[57] Fabri left a rather detailed account of his pilgrimage, which is commonly known as *The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*.[58] Although his main objects of interest were not all that different from that of his fellow Christian pilgrims, Fabri had a sharp eye and regularly broached topics that far exceeded the ordinary purview of other Christian travelers. For example, he mentions that the towers along the wall of Jerusalem are completely ruined because "the Saracens" have intentionally destroyed them. On the other hand, "they built new towers near the city's mosques" from which they "call people to pray."[59] He then comments that, instead of fortifying cities, the Mamluks put an emphasis on defending the empire's borders.[60] These intriguing remarks allude to the connection between security and the symbolic meaning of minarets. In the case of Jerusalem, Fabri certainly has a point. Late fifteenth-century Jerusalem featured eight minarets, four of which were constructed along the perimeter of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Of the remaining four, two loomed over the Holy Sepulchre and another overshadowed a synagogue in the heart of the Jewish quarter. Therefore, it is obvious that he picked up on the heavy-handed message of Islamic dominance that the minarets evinced. The correlation between minarets and the sultanate's defence strategy stems from the fact that Fabri did not differentiate between the political and religious sphere.

Following his analysis of Mamluk policy, Fabri notes that the sacred compounds on the Temple Mount and those around the Holy Sepulchre comprise a substantial portion of the urban landscape. "Besides these [i.e., the Temple Mount and the Great Church]," he writes, "there are many chapels of heretics, many Saracen mosques, Jewish synagogues, and Samaritan tabernacles [sic] scattered throughout the city."[61] Since there were very few mosques in Jerusalem at the time, this observation seems to

[56] Ibid., 138.
[57] French, "Pilgrimage, Ritual, and Power," 169.
[58] Felix Fabri, *The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*, trans. A. Stewart, PPTS (London, 1897), 7–10.
[59] Ibid., 9, 225.
[60] Ibid., 9, 226.
[61] Ibid., 7, 226.

indicate that Fabri was under the impression that all the Muslims' religious and pious compounds, such as *madrasas* and Ṣūfī lodges, outside the holy precinct were mosques. In other words, he realized that these were buildings of religious importance, but could not be troubled to determine their specific functions and thus placed them all under the same heading. Alternatively, the Dominican may have simply been unaware of the full repertoire of Islamic institutions.

That said, Fabri pays special attention to the crescents that were perched atop many of Jerusalem's Islamic buildings. Although his discussion on thee symbols is rather lengthy, I have taken the liberty of presenting almost the entire passage, for it attests to some of the intrinsic problems that fathoming spatial images entails:

> On the very top of the roof there stands a horn moon with the horns uppermost, such as they put upon all their mosques; for on the top of all their churches or mosques they set a moon on its back like a boat. . . In order to differ from both [i.e., Jews and Christians], the Saracens have cast away the cross and have retained the cock on the top of their buildings without the cross; but as even without the cock they seemed to be imitating the Christians. . . . [S]o likewise in all their rites they made certain alterations that they may be unlike us. Another reason is on account of Mahomet, who was altogether lunatical [sic] and given to wanton pleasure, to which the moon influenced men beyond all other stars, seeing that it is of a moist nature, so that even the sea ebbs and flows in obedience to the moon's motion. Other reasons may be given, derived from the laws of Mahomet, as, for example the God has given them the moon on its back for an ensign, because their law is void in its upper parts, even as the moon on its back without grace and so forth turned away from the sun, ever empty, dark, void; it takes away the sun's brightness from us, because it comes between us and the sun.[62]

Fabri is indeed engaged in an elaborate, albeit cynical, semiotic reading of the crescent. Although his harsh remarks stigmatize an entire civilization, the Dominican makes no effort to substantiate his claims. His barbs against the Prophet Muḥammad and his religion in general stand out for their unbridled nature. More than anything else, Fabri's vitriol comes in response to his penetrating grasp of Christianity's inferior position in Jerusalem during the late fifteenth century – a predicament we already got a taste of in, say, his above-mentioned description of the aggressive Islamic architecture around the Holy Sepulchre. Likewise, the monk bemoans the minaret and mosque that were erected next to the Hospitallers' compound: :From this tower they shout all day and night as is the custom of the 'cursed religion"' and "they engage in such activities

[62] Ibid., 244.

with the utmost disrespect to the Crucified and as an insult to Christendom."[63]

Muslim construction next to the holiest sites of other faiths was indeed part of a spreading phenomenon of religious intolerance on the part of the ruling majority in Jerusalem.[64] The following story, which is related by Mujīr al-Dīn, seems to confirm Fabri's suspicions:

> I was told by shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn shaykh ʿAbdāllah al-Baghdādī that when shaykh Burhān al-Dīn ibn Ghānim intended to build the minaret I mentioned earlier [i.e. the one above the Khānqāh al-Salāḥiyya], the Christians were extremely dismayed by it as it was [slated to] tower over the Holy Sepulchre. They have decided to pay a fortune to shaykh Burhān al-Dīn in order to persuade him to halt construction. But he took no heed and reproached them with harsh words and built the minaret and appointed a person to conduct the ceremonies [i.e., the call to prayer] from it. It is said that one of the prophet's companions, may God's prayers be upon him, came to him in a dream and told him: the messenger of the lord conveys his blessings to you and wishes to inform you that you will be included in his intercession on the Day of Judgment as a reward for the construction of a minaret above the head of the infidels.[65]

In sum, the Muslims were intentionally constructing conspicuous spatial symbols adjacent to Christian institutions in order to trumpet their dominance.

Most of the descriptions that were penned by visitors to Mamluk *al-Shām* seem to be highly atomistic in nature. Put differently, authors concentrated on spatial images that accorded their own religiocultural worldview. In so doing, they strengthen Eric Cohen's hypothesis:

> So long as man remains largely ignorant of the existence of other societies, of other cultures, he regards his own small world as the cosmos. What lies outside is mysterious and unknown and therefore dangerous and threatening. It can only inspire fear or, at best, indifference, lacking as it does any reality for him.[66]

In summation, the principal objective of these Jewish and Christian pilgrims was to worship and experience sites that were holy to their religion. The manner in which they were attuned to their "own" spatial images and

[63] Ibid., 8, 395–403. Fabri is referring to the Afḍal ʿAlī Mosque, which was built shortly after the city was taken from the Crusaders in 1187.

[64] For a discussion on the mounting difficulties of non-Muslim communities during the late Mamluk period, see E. Strauss(Ashtor), "The Social Isolation of Ahl al-Dhimma," in O. Komlos (ed.), *Orientales a la Mémoire de Paul Hirschler* (Budapest, 1950), 73–94.

[65] Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns* 2, 49.

[66] E. Cohen, "Toward a Sociology of International Tourism," *Social Research* 39/1 (1972): 165.

their eschewal, omission, misreading, or failure to even acknowledge "foreign" icons and landmarks bears witness to the sway of the habitus.

It is rather easy to ignore the "Other" in literary texts because the author is under no obligation to mention every component of the landscape. However, this is certainly not the case in cartographic representations, where the mapmaker is expected to provide an exhaustive portrait of the chosen topic.

THE CITY IN CARTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS

Maps purport to mirror the world, but the "reality" that they depict is fashioned in the image of its maker's perceptions, ideals, and/or goals. By their very nature, cartographic representations make claims about a certain reality that is usually out of its audience's reach. For instance, how many of us have actually seen the Grand Canyon, the source of the Nile or, as Wood puts it, "our planet from afar"?[67] Yet people tend to accept maps of places from all over the universe as the gospel truth. In fact, no other spatial representation has enjoyed such uncontested trustworthiness as an objective source of information.[68] However, recent works in the field of critical cartography have indeed demystified the map. For instance, J. B. Harley, one of the leading scholars in the field, calls into question "the canons of traditional cartographic criticism with its string binary opposition between maps that are 'true and false,' 'accurate and inaccurate,' 'objective and subjective,' 'literal and symbolic,' or based on 'scientific integrity,' as opposed to 'ideological distinction.' Maps are never value-free images; except in the narrowest Euclidian sense."[69] Like any other text, maps should be viewed as socially constructed (and constructing) tools that reflect both reality and their makers' cultural world. Crafted by human beings, maps are a final product of biased objectives and subjective interpretations of the world. For this reason, they are inevitably suffused with symbols of power. As Rubin succinctly argued, "by choosing what to show, how to show it, and what to conceal, maps reflect the ideas, interests and messages of their makers."[70] It is with these insights in mind that I turn

[67] D. Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York, 1992), 7.

[68] R. B. Craib, "Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain," *Latin America Research Review* 35 (2000): 8.

[69] J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and the Use of Past Environment* (Cambridge and New York, 1988), 278.

[70] R. Rubin, "One City, Different Views: A Comparative Study of Three Pilgrimage Maps of Jerusalem," *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006): 268.

to an analysis of several cartographical works that depicted Mamluk *al-Shām*.

As an aside, I would like to preface this discussion by paying tribute to Fuat Sezgin's immense contribution to the research of maps in the Islamic world and the importance of his studies to European cartography as well.[71] To the best of my knowledge, though, there are no relevant maps of Syrian cities from the Mamluk period that were drafted by Muslim mapmakers.[72]

In 1307, Marino Sanudo, a Venetian diplomat and geographer, presented Pope Clement V with a book titled *Secreta* (or *Liber Secretorum*) *Fidelium Crucis*.[73] The impetus behind this work was to advance Sanudo's lifelong ambition of reviving the Crusader spirit and convincing European powers to launch another campaign to "save" the Holy Land from the "infidel." *Secreta Fidelium Crucis* included a map of Jerusalem by a cartographer named Petrus Vesconte. It is obvious from the map's content that Vesconte sought to create a realistic picture of the city.[74] That said, the map depicts Jerusalem as a highly fortified city, even though its wall, which was at least partially destroyed in 1219, had yet to be restored.[75] Consequently, Rubin wonders if Sanudo "described the walls of Jerusalem as a true testimony of his own eyes or as he would have liked to paint them for his fellow Europeans? Was it a premeditated deed or simply an honest mistake?"[76]

In any event, most of this map's featured sites are Christian. Although some of these places indeed existed during Vesconte's visit to Jerusalem, others are fabricated representations of events and locales that are mentioned in the New Testament. For instance, the cartographer draws two imposing structures in the holy precinct: *Area Templi*, namely the area of the temple, and *Domus Salomonis*, the House of Solomon. Needless to say, the two sites are the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqṣā Mosque; however,

[71] F. Sezgin, *Gescichte des Arabischen Schriftum*, vols. X–XII (Frankfurt am Main, 2000). Also see idem, *Mathematical Geography and Cartography in Islam and Their Continuation in the Occident*, trans. G. Moore and G. Sammon, vols. I–III (Frankfurt am Main, 2000–2006).

[72] See R. Rubin, *Image and Reality. Jerusalem in Maps and Views* (Jerusalem, 1999), 21.

[73] The book is also called *Historia Hierosolymitana*, *Liber de expeditione Terrae Sanctae*; C. R. Beazley, "Sanuto (Sanudo) Marino," *Encyclopedia Britannica* 23, 196–197.

[74] M. Levy, "Medieval Maps of Jerusalem," in J. Prawer and H. Ben-Shammai (eds.), *The History of Jerusalem. Crusaders and Ayyubids 1099–1250* (Jerusalem, 1991), 490 [Hebrew].

[75] Sharon, "The Ayyubid Walls of Jerusalem."

[76] Rubin, *Image and Reality*, 31.

they bear no resemblance to the actual Islamic structures on the ground. According to Rubin, this is a mechanism that Vesconte used to cope with, what for Christians was, an anathema – Islam's dominant presence in the city. This may very well be the case, but I would like to suggest an alternative contextualization for what seems to be a recurrent theme in medieval European maps of Jerusalem.

Many are the cultures that put a premium on naming.[77] For example, Sigrid King shows that the use of names was a key empowering mechanism among black women in early-American slave communities,[78] as those wielding power (i.e., the slave masters) assumed the right to name their chattel. By providing Judeo-Christian names for Islam's most revered sites, Vesconte not only ignored the reality that he encountered in Jerusalem, but at least symbolically claimed possession over these landmarks.[79] This instance of cartographic supersession within the framework of the period's Muslim-Christian power struggles also exemplifies what Harley aptly defined as the traditional binaries in the field of mapmaking. More specifically, the accurate depiction of Jerusalem's contours and at least some of its more iconic buildings imparts Vesconte's map with a realistic façade, yet the work is rife with ideological biases. Therefore, we may conclude that classifying a map as either entirely imagined or realistic is both methodologically and theoretically flawed.

Compared to Vesconte's rendering, the map of Jerusalem that accompanies Sebald Reiter's mid fifteenth-century book offers a much more realistic portrait of the contemporaneous urban landscape.[80] To begin, the city's wall is down in several places. Although overly simplistic, this appears to be an accurate representation of the wall's condition at the time. Reiter also provides several indications of the Muslim presence in the city. First and foremost, he crowns the sacred compounds in the Ḥaram al-Sharīf with crescents. One of the structures in the holy precinct is called *Ecclesia Sarazeni* (the Church of the Saracens) and indeed bears a resemblance to al-Aqṣā Mosque. North of this building is a schematic representation of the Dome of the Rock. Although it is labeled *Templum Salomonis*, it is also adorned with a crescent. Moreover, there is a realistic

[77] This is especially true of oral cultures; see W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (London, 1982), 33.

[78] S. King, "Naming and Power in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God," *Black America Literature Forum* 24/4 (Winter, 1990): 683–696.

[79] This point surely merits further attention. However, given the limited scope of this book, I am merely proposing it as a working idea.

[80] Rubin, *Images and Realities*, 35; also see Levy, "Medieval Maps," 495–500.

depiction of the Mamluk-style minarets on the western edge of the compound. Next to the Noble Sanctuary's western wall is a fortified structure that Reiter calls Soldanis – a relatively common Latinized derivative of the word "sultan." This toponym perhaps refers to the Madrasa al-Jawuliyya, which then served as the governor's residence.[81] The incorporation of Muslim elements notwithstanding, the emphasis of this map, like many of its medieval counterparts, is on Christian sites within the urban landscape.

Printed in 1538, Hermanus van Borculus's map depicts the city from east to west, from the vantage point of the Mount of Olives.[82] The unbroken wall around the city suggests that the cartographer already took into account the renovation project that was carried out by the Ottomans from 1538 to 1541. In addition, the map's layout roughly adheres to that of the historical city, thereby reinforcing the hypothesis that van Borculus indeed visited Jerusalem before drafting the map. That said, the representation of the Temple Mount is laden with images and scenes from the Gospels.[83] Although the Islamic compounds on the holy precinct are included in the map, he does not denote their function.

Antonio de Angelis (1578), a Franciscan monk who served in Jerusalem for eight years and was intimately familiar with the city, designed his map along the same lines as van Borculus.[84] The map legend contains about ninety items, most of which signify the sites of Christian canonical events. De Angelis includes the Muslim compounds on the Temple Mount, but portrays them as Christian sites. On the western side of the city, the sketch of the citadel contains the Ottoman elements that were added between 1538 and 1541. The location and rendering of minarets are fairly accurate. As opposed to the previous map, the crescents are duly represented.

From the Crusader conquest to the early Ottoman period, Jerusalem merited quite a bit of attention from European cartographers,[85] so that we have only covered a few of the maps that were drawn. My main objective

[81] For example, the word "Soldanis" turns up in a fifteenth-century travel diary by one Meshullam of Volterra, a Jewish merchant from Tuscany; idem, *The Voyage of Meshullam of Volterra in the Land of Israel in the Year 1481*, ed. A. Yaari (Jerusalem, 1959), 76 [Hebrew].

[82] R. Rubin, "The Map of Hermanus Borculus (1538) and Its Copies," *The Cartographic Journal* 27 (1990): 31–39.

[83] Rubin, "Early Printed Maps," 132.

[84] For a detailed analysis of de Angelis' map, see R. Rubin, "The De-Angelis Map of Jerusalem (1578) and Its Copies," *Chathedra* 52 (1989): 100–111.

[85] In general, maps had become a popular tool throughout the European continent during this period.

was to show how these artisans were scripting the city for a very specific audience. Driven primarily by religious motives and their own habitus, they tended to leave out or downplay spatial images that ran counter to their worldview, and some of them depicted Jerusalem as a typical European city. Be that as it may, these devout Christian mapmakers could not ignore the imageability of the citadel, the prominence of the holy precinct, or the litany of minarets throughout the city. Even the most biased or unperceptive cartographer was unable to ignore the city's most salient spatial images.

Arab-cum-Muslim cartographers did not place a high priority on producing maps of cities. However, the one glaring exception to this rule is the Ottoman admiral Piri Reis, who compiled a book titled *Kitāb al-Baḥriyya* (the Book of the Sea) in 1513. The maps in his work are iconic in nature and certainly do not provide accurate urban depictions. Among the cartographic representations therein is a map of the world, which was largely based on military intelligence.[86] Reis also offers exhaustive data for seafarers on topics like navigation, geography, and harbors. For example, the book provides maps of port towns in the Levant, including one of Tripoli.[87] Pursuant to the book's overall style, Tripoli's land objects are depicted from the vantage point of a ship approaching the shore. The coastline, the city, and its hinterland are represented in a highly schematic fashion. The port area consists of several Mamluk watch towers and a small cluster of nondescript houses that surround a mosque and its towering minaret. That said, the minaret is too lean and conic to be a genuine Mamluk one, so that Reis was apparently drawing on his own imagination and cultural background. The town itself is represented as a dense concentration of houses on either side of the Abū ʿAlī River. Isolated high above the city, but still dominating its landscape, is the citadel – a fortified compound with three massive guard towers. Due east of the city and distinctly separated from it is a lush agricultural area, which Reis calls "the Garden of Tripoli." The importance of the port to the city's economy is evident. This mosque that the cartographer assigns to the port area might be Tripoli's Friday mosque. Although the building was not located in this area, its position on the map may reflect the cartographer's seaside perspective.

As a sailor, Reis clearly focuses on issues that pertain to an embarking ship. However, the citadel's domineering position on the landscape did not

[86] M. E. Ozen, *Piri Reis and His Charts* (Istanbul, 1998), 3–13.
[87] Ibid., 63.

escape his attention. Unlike his Christians counterparts, Reis obviously had no compunctions about scripting Muslim spatial images. Leaning on a small handful of icons, the Ottoman admiral created a laconic yet informative rendering that captures the gist of Mamluk Tripoli.

The objective behind this sampling of medieval maps is to point out the factors that influence the way "image makers" represent urban landscapes. In essence, maps are a compromise between a spatial reality and the narrator's perception and portrayal of that same expanse. Like a textual source, the cartographic account betrays its creator's identity, upbringing, and ideologies. These descriptions indeed help us contextualize urban expanses. The acumen and advanced knowledge that is required to fully grasp these documents suggest that, much like modern-day urban scholars, mapmakers sought to conceptualize the landscape of cities.

8

The Public Sphere

Urban Autonomy and Its Limitations

Drawing on the Habermassian contextualization of the public sphere, this chapter explores the nature of this realm in Mamluk cities. In pursuing this course, I hope to enhance our understanding of these settlements and their various stakeholders. This discussion concentrates on four different episodes in which different urban players reveal not only themselves, but the cultural norms that guided their behavior. It appears as though religious codes played a crucial role in dictating the public social norms, including the residents' political conduct, in the cities under review. The principal arbitrators of this etiquette were the learned elite (*'ulamā'*), in their capacity as religious experts and interpreters of the laws governing daily life. That said, our case studies demonstrate that *'ulamā'* did not have a monopoly over these matters because the Mamluks also flexed their muscle in certain circumstances.

In this respect, the role of Islam, or what was locally interpreted as such, was essential, for all the major players claimed to abide by its precepts. Public areas were shaped by the state's interests, on the one hand, and a highly particular code of social identity, on the other. Although the *'ulamā'* enjoyed a fair share of autonomy in formulating these norms, the Mamluks checked their power whenever they felt that the state's interests were being compromised. Scholarly claims as to an omnipotent regime notwithstanding, the citizens were far from passive when they believed that their own fundamental rights were on the line.

OIL HIKES IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TRIPOLI

In mid-Dhu-l-Hijja 888 (December 31, 1483), merchants and peddlers from Tripoli gathered in the local *dār al-'adl* ("Palace of Justice"[1]) to

[1] N. O. Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of the *Dār al-'Adl* in the Medieval Islamic Orient," *IJMES* 27 (1995): 3.

submit a complaint to the Mamluk governor, Ināl al-Ashrafī, regarding his latest decree: forcing them to buy oil, soap, and grapes at exaggerated prices.[2] After the meeting, the governor indeed annulled the onerous taxes on these items, thereby reducing the cost. We are privy to this dispute thanks to an inscription mounted on one of the inner walls of Tripoli's al-Shamsiyya Madrasa.[3]

The state's extraction of money from local subjects by inventive means – be they legal or dubious – mushroomed toward the end of the Mamluk Empire, especially in *al-Shām*. The economic decline and the regime's prolonged difficulties covering its general expenses spawned increasing attempts on the part of the bureaucracy to extort funds from the populace.[4] In this particular case, however, the governor apparently adhered to "proper" procedure, and the corrective measures were publicized in the "public sphere."

Focusing on the sociospatial aspects and implications of this exchange, the argument can be made that it was a public event and even a ritual.[5] The hearing, as noted, took place in one of the unique public institutions to evolve in Ayyubid Egypt and Syria – *dār al-ʿadl* – the first of which was probably established by Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zankī in Damascus circa 1163. Rabbat credits the rise of the Palace of Justice to the following historical circumstances:

> *Dār al-ʿadl* was not simply a development of the *qaḍā' al-maẓālim* institution.[6] It was an original innovation of an extraordinary time: the period of the Counter-Crusade and the ideological revival that went with it, as ideal Islamic qualities were promulgated by both the ruling and religious classes and demanded

[2] The term that surfaces in the relevant document is *ṭarḥa*, which might best be translated as "forced selling"; see Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 78.

[3] Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, 76.

[4] For more on the general economic decline of the sultanate, see E. L. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (London, 1976), 319–330; ibid., "The Economic Decline of the Middle East in the Later Middle Ages, An Outline," *AAS* 15 (1981): 253–286. Lapidus focuses on the amirs' brutal approach toward the Syrian populace during the late fifteenth century; idem, *Muslim Cities*, 143–152. Sultan Barsbāy's economic policy is often considered the climax of the central government's intervention in local economies and levying of unlawful taxes. For a summary of the sultan's policy, see J. L. Meloy, "Economic Intervention and the Political Economy of the Mamluk State under al-Ashraf Barsbāy," *MSR* 9/2 (2005): 85–103.

[5] For a disquisition on the functional aspects of rituals and their ramifications on society, see C. Bell, *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York, 1997), 23–60.

[6] Literally, "judge dealing with grievances." For more on this tribunal, see Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, vol. 2, 116–129; and S. Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World* (New York, 2003), 51–56.

by the people. The *dār al-ʿadl* visually represented one of these qualities, justice, and provided the rulers with a forum publicly to claim their adherence to proper Islamic codes.[7]

In other words, this institution stemmed from the rise of an accepted Islamic outlook whereby rulers are expected to remedy injustices or wrongs (*ẓulm*, pl. *maẓālim*) that are inflicted on their subjects.[8] More specifically, Rabbat attributes the establishment of *dār al-ʿadl* to the need of non-Arab rulers of Arab lands to present an ideal image of themselves as guardians of justice.[9] While stressing the hermeneutic and symbolic aspects of the Palace of Justice, Tabbaa also contends that the Mamluk officials had ulterior motives for sponsoring this institution, at least in the early days of the empire: by giving lower classes an outlet for challenging the upper echelons of urban society, the Palace of Justice helped the regime control the indigenous elites.[10] Be that as it may, this institution enabled the populace to issue complaints against the sultanate as well.

The very convocation of a public hearing at the *dār al-ʿadl* points to the existence of an accepted procedure that afforded the public with a certain degree of latitude vis-à-vis the ruler. However, the fact that the venue was an institution of state did impose certain restraints on the public's manoeuvrability. At the end of the day, the Palace of Justice was a spatial extension of the sultan, so that the activities therein were defined and monitored by the regime. The extent of the populace's ability to challenge the patrimonial state was thus predicated, to a large degree, on the location of the proceedings. Within this context, it is worth noting that Tripoli's *dār al-ʿadl* was located near the citadel, which was perhaps the most foreboding symbol of the Mamluk sultanate's presence and power in the region.

Another phase of this narrative played itself out at al-Shamsiyya, the *madrasa* where the inscription was hung. Displaying the solution on the wall of a seminary clearly demonstrates the *ulamā*'s unique role not only as champions of the public interest, but as mediators between the local population and government. Lev judiciously notes that relations between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the Mamluks (or what he defines as a symbiosis) did not prevent friction between the two groups. For example, the clergy's role as a sort of public advocate on social-economic issues was bound to test the

[7] Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance," 4.
[8] J. S. Nielsen, "Maẓālim," *EI*^{2} 6: 933; and ibid., "*Maẓālim* and *Dār al-ʿAdl* under the Early Mamluks," *Muslim World* 66 (1976): 114–132. Also see Y. Tabbaa, *Construction of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park, PA, 1997), 64–70.
[9] Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance," 20.
[10] Tabbaa, *Aleppo*, 65.

regime's patience.[11] Against this backdrop, the mounting of the decree in a *madrasa* attests to the importance of religion and Islamic norms in setting the rules for accepted public conduct and dictating the nature of the public sphere. It certainly speaks to the role of the religious elite as communal trustees who were responsible for maintaining public order.

In light of this, the following questions beg asking: what exactly is the urban public? Who defines the norms outside the realm of the household? How did the urban population conduct its communal life, and who were the major players on this stage? And, last but not least, what was the nature of the involvement of different groups and individuals in those facets of life that were by and large controlled by the patrimonial state? These questions cut to the heart of two of the most crucial issues in the research of historical Islamic cities: urban autonomy and the manner in which the city was perceived by its inhabitants. The second issue, which may also be understood as an urban sense of place, is essential to the current study because it pertains to urban mechanisms and cultural attributes that facilitated the daily functioning of cities and ensured their very existence. Put differently, this chapter explores those realms of urban life that lie between the "official" and "private" spheres.

PUBLIC SPHERE AND PUBLIC SPACE

In the opening pages of *Muslim Cities*, Lapidus underscored the importance of sociopolitical organization:

> We must look more deeply into the urban constitution. . ., into the total configuration of relationships by which organized urban social life was carried on: the structure of the classes. . ., the nature of their organization, and the forces which shaped their interaction. . . [O]nly in this way can we arrive at some of the fundamentals of city life, and expose the social relationships by which order and community were created.[12]

Lapidus was intent on debunking the notion that Muslim cities' perceived lack of independent associations and sense of community limited them to mere physical agglomerations. As already noted, these alleged shortcomings constitute one of the main arguments in support of the "Islamic city" model.[13] In contrast, Lapidus argued that the "way in which people acted

[11] Lev, "Semiotic Relations," 25.
[12] Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 3.
[13] See Von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Islamic City"; and the critique thereof in Raymond, "Islamic City."

in public affairs formed a pattern which made integrated societies out of the city populations despite the absence of formal political institutions."[14]

Lapidus's innovative approach of looking at the pattern of public affairs and recognition of a "public" was encumbered by his generation's prevailing theories about modernity, which also shaped conventional thinking about the cities of the Middle East and the Islamic world. Moreover, by concentrating on the social aspects of the urban sphere, Lapidus somewhat neglected the physical dimensions of the city. Be that as it may, he went a long way toward transforming the way cities are imagined, especially with respect to the existence of a public sphere.

The idea of the public sphere is primarily associated with the work of Jürgen Habermas, who basically implied that there is a realm that is distinct from both the formal structure of political authority and the private realm.[15] Habermas' discussion revolves around European societies, the development of the modernistic ideas of democracy and nation-states, and the genesis of a public and hence public opinion. Therefore, his analysis is largely confined to the development of bourgeoisie society in seventeenth-century Europe. According to Habermas, the public sphere is a social realm in which something approaching a public opinion can be formed. The spatial aspect is implicit, although not directly addressed, in his contextualization. More specifically, the public sphere is "neutral ground" where different parts of society can develop and exchange ideas away from, at least to some extent, the prying eyes of the state. In other words, it is the sum total of activities and ideas that generally dictate the public order and form and inform public opinion.[16]

Despite the growing criticism of his philosophy, Habermas ideas have recently been projected onto other geographical and historical settings.[17] In his later writings, Habermas even stated that there is no inherent reason why the notion of the public sphere should be restricted to an idealized European bourgeoisie.[18] Eickelman and Salvatore have contributed substantially to the discourse on the public sphere beyond Europe and the

[14] Ibid., 203.

[15] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, 1992).

[16] C. Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 5 (1993): 267–280.

[17] Habermas was assailed on various fronts, including his Eurocentric approach and disregard of religion as a major component of early modern Western societies by many scholars; e.g., C. Calhoun (ed.), "Introduction," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 1–48.

[18] Habermas, 2001.

context of modernity. In so doing, they have revitalized Dewey's observation that no two ages or places view the public the same way[19] – a more flexible outlook that is better suited for research on public spheres outside the European trajectory. In Dewey's estimation, the public sphere is the product of and organized by manifold players who seek to advance the public interest by regulating the joint actions of individuals and groups.[20] The concept of the public sphere can indeed take on a much broader meaning if we extend it beyond any specific temporal and geographic setting. This approach has certainly gained currency in studies on historical Muslim societies.[21] In Mamluk Syria, the public sphere refers to places (in the social and spatial sense) that are not necessarily autonomous from the political order but are public in the sense of enabling different players to participate in society. As Eisenstadt argued, the public sphere prompts debates on the common good. Moreover, he claimed that it tends to have a dynamic of its own, as random historical, political, and/or social factors have proven to be capable of transforming this sphere.[22]

The public sphere undoubtedly possesses a spatial dimension. It is alluded to in every contextualization of the public and in every discussion of what constitutes a public sphere. The activities therein literally take place. What, then, makes or transforms a venue into a public one? One key determinant is the nature of the activities. Public space is comprised of the totality of venues where "public activities" are held. In these realms, people encounter members of society from outside their immediate circles (i.e., strangers).[23] In her study on urban conflicts, Sharon Zukin contends that public space is the main arena for struggles between various groups over the nature of "public culture."[24] These sort of conflicts may indeed be found in any human society,[25] but the unique cultural characteristics of

[19] J. Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York, 1927).
[20] Ibid., 35.
[21] Most notably, M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (New York, 2002).
[22] S. N. Eisenstadt, "Concluding Remarks: Public Sphere, Civil Society, and Political Dynamics in Islamic Societies," in ibid., 139–140.
[23] R. Sennet, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York, 1992), 17. Also see P. G. Goheen, "Public Sphere and the Geography of the Modern City," *Progress in Human Geography* 22/4 (1988): 479–496. Meeting strangers is indeed a common occurrence in the urban public sphere; see G. Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* Trans. and Eds. D. Weinstein and Kurt Wolff (New York, 1950), 409–424.
[24] S. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 10–12.
[25] I elaborated on the political nature of culture in the introductory remarks to this book.

any given community influence and ultimately define the nature of its public space.

In the following sections, we will examine the nature of the public sphere in the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām* by analyzing both the social and spatial consequences of public activities. My objective is to demonstrate that the venues in which public events unfold contain ample information about the society in question and the dynamics of its cities. By taking stock of this realm, I offer another channel for grasping the very essence of urban life in Mamluk Syria.

THE SULTAN VS. THE ULAMĀ: WHO DEFINES THE PUBLIC SPHERE?

In 1473/878, a public imbroglio erupted over a house in the Jewish neighborhood of Jerusalem.[26] South of and adjacent to the community's synagogue stood an endowed mosque. Next to the mosque was a Jewish-owned house that had collapsed in the face of heavy winter rains. Seizing the opportunity, the Muslims demanded legal possession of the lot in order to clear the debris and improve access to their own house of worship from the main street. In the subsequent judicial hearing, which was probably held at that same mosque, the Jews presented the court documents supporting their claim of ownership over the ruined building. The judges ruled in favor of the Jews, but the Muslim community appealed the ruling before the city's chief judges. The review was conducted in the same mosque, and the three presiding *qāḍīs*[27] upheld the original decision.

[26] My narrative of the events is largely based on Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, vol. 2, 300–340. That said, other less comprehensive, sources are also available. For example, Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'iʿ al-Duhūr*, vol. 3 (Cairo, 1936), 101–102; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmiʿ fī al-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1353/1934), 50; ibid., vol. 5, 176; ibid., vol. 8, 258; and Ibn ʿUbayya, *Wafa' al-ʿUhud fī Wujūb Hadm Kanisat al-Yahūd* (MS at the National Library of Israel). See S. D. Goitein's partial translation of this manuscript in idem, "Ibn ʿUbayya's Book on the Destruction of the Jewish Synagogue in Jerusalem in 1474," *Zion* 13–14 (1948–9): 18–32. The "synagogue affair" is also examined by Little, "Communal Strife." Given Little's impressive comprehensive survey of these events, I tried to keep my own historical narrative as short as possible. Whereas Little concentrates on legal issues, I have placed an emphasis on urban autonomy and the local community's internal and external relationships. Last, I am indebted to Amikam Elad for his insightful comments and suggestions regarding this manuscript.

[27] There were usually four chief judges, representing the four Islamic legal schools. However, the Mālikī judge had passed away earlier that year and a successor had yet to be appointed. Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, vol. 2, 301.

Unhappy with the outcome, Shaykh Abū al-ʿAzam b. al-Ḥalāwī, a renowned jurist from Jerusalem,[28] traveled to Cairo to pitch an innovative legal argument before al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāītbāy, the reigning sultan. According to the shaykh, the house was part and parcel of the synagogue's lot, and since the house of worship was allegedly constructed after the Islamic conquest, it should be considered an "illegal initiative" (*muḥdatha*).[29] As a result of al-Ḥalāwī's lobbying, the sultan ordered the authorities in Jerusalem to reconsider the case.

The third hearing took place at al-Tankiziyya, a *madrasa* due west of Ḥaram al-Sharīf. The session was attended by a panoply of local dignitaries, including Amir Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Nashāshībī, the supervisor of the two noble sanctuaries (in Jerusalem and Hebron), Shihāb al-Dīn ibn ʿUbayya, the Shāfiʿī judge, Khayr al-Dīn b. ʿUmrān, the Ḥanafī judge, Shaykh al-Islam Najm al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿa,[30] Burhān al-Dīn al-Anṣārī, and Shaykh al-Madrasa al-Ṣalāḥiyya. Yaacov, one of the Jewish community's elders, was also called to testify, and he indeed challenged Ibn ʿŪbayya legal claim regarding the provenance of the synagogue. However, the judges ultimately reversed the previous rulings. What is more, they had the synagogue closed down and prohibited the community from holding services therein.

In response, the Jews dispatched a letter to Sultan Qāītbāy explaining all that had transpired and entreating him to reopen their synagogue. Thereafter, a hearing was convened at Cairo's al-Ṣalāḥiyya Madrasa in which Egypt's chief judges decided to reverse the latest decision against the Jewish community. In consequence, a new royal decree was dispatched to Jerusalem ordering the city's governor and religious leaders to reconvene for the purpose of formulating a decision that accorded with the latest ruling from Cairo. Yet another hearing was thus convened in Jerusalem,

[28] One of the leading Islamic scholars, al-Ḥalāwī was indeed venerated by his Jerusalemite peers; see ibid., vol. 2, 199.

[29] In raising this argument, al-Ḥalāwī was drawing on his interpretation of the terms of surrender that were agreed on between the victorious Muslims and the leaders of Byzantine Jerusalem, as stipulated in the Pact of ʿUmar (*alʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya*); see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-Rusul w-aʾl-Mulūk*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1964), 2405–2406. Also see the discussion on the Pact of ʿUmar in H. Busse, "The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam," *Judaism* 17 (1968): 448–455.

[30] The title "shaykh al-Islam" had different connotations in different places and periods. During the Mamluk sultanate, it simply meant a respectable scholar of public standing; see, J. H. Kramers, "Shaikh al-Islam," *EI*[1] 7: 275–279. Najm al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿa was the scion of one of Mamluk Jerusalem's most prestigious families; see, K. S. Salibi, "The Bānū Jamāʿa: A Dynasty of Shāfʿite Jurists," *SI* 9 (1959): 97–110.

this time at Bāb al-Nāẓir – one of the main gates of the Noble Sanctuary. This session drew participants and spectators from all walks of life, from religious scholars to modest commoners. Among the notables present were Amir Jaqmaq, the Mamluk governor of the city, al-Nashāshībī, the supervisor of the two noble sanctuaries, ibn ʿUbayya, the Shāfiʿī judge, al-Dīn b. ʿUmrān, the Ḥanafī judge, al-Anṣārī, and Shaykh Abū al-ʿAzām al-Ḥalāwī. It also bears noting that, in contrast to the accepted norm, Jews were allowed into the Ḥaram al-Sharīf for the purpose of taking part in the proceedings. The meeting started with a public reading of the new decree from Cairo revoking Ibn ʿUabayya's legal claim. Upon hearing the decision, the incensed Shāfiʿī scholar had the Jews removed from the precinct. At the end of a lengthy deliberation, he accepted the Jews' claim of ownership over the synagogue, but barred them from using it as a place of worship. To substantiate this ruling, witnesses were brought in to testify that the building was indeed a new one and thus in violation of the Pact of ʿUmar. The Jerusalem authorities then forwarded their decision to Sultan Qā'it Bāy in Cairo.

In the beginning of 879/1474, a new order arrived from the sultan instructing Jerusalem's endowments supervisor to permit the Jews to reopen the synagogue. This turn of events drew the ire of the city's Muslim populace. Furthermore, an anonymous letter was sent to Qā'it Bāy accusing him of accepting a bribe from the Jewish community.[31] In response, the sultan demanded that the authorities in Jerusalem expose the writer's identity. A public meeting was held at the paved platform (*mistaba*) near al-Aqṣā Mosque. Among the dignitaries in attendance were the endowments supervisor, the governor, Shaykh al-Madrasa al-Ṣalāḥiyya, the Shāfiʿī judge, and the Ḥanafī judge. As part of the proceedings, heads of Ṣūfī orders were interrogated about their possible involvement in the accusatory letter, but the *qādīs* failed to wrest an admission from any of the suspects. In consequence, the leaders of the Muslim community of Jerusalem sent a letter to Qā'it Bāy informing him that the culprit was not found. The sultan was naturally chagrined and ordered a few community figures to stand before a disciplinary tribunal in Cairo, but the hearing never took place. Instead, a representative of the sultan was sent to Jerusalem to chair a committee of inquiry.

The committee held its opening session on the 4 Rajab 879/November 14, 1474 at al-Tankiziyya Madrasa. Muḥammad b. ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Abajī

[31] While Mujīr al-Dīn expressly accuses the Ṣūfīs of writing the anonymous letter, he does not mention any of them by name; idem, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, vol. 2, 305.

al-Ḥusaynī, the sultan's envoy, the Mamluk governor Shaykh al-Islam Kamāl al-Dīn Abī Sharīf, Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn al-Anṣārī, Ibn ʿUbayya (the above-mentioned Shāfiʿī judge), and the Ḥanafī judge were among those present. At the end of a lengthy and heated legal debate, Ibn ʿUbayya reaffirmed his previous decision banning the Jews from using the property as a synagogue, but the denouement was yet to come. After the session, none other than the sultan's representative led a Muslim delegation to the synagogue and ordered them to raze the building. At the height of the demolition process, Shaykh Abū al-ʿAzām came to show his support and urged the workers on with the following words: "The dust rising from the dismantling of the compound is surely the dust of heaven."[32]

When news reached the capital about the defiant contravention of the direct sultanic order concerning the synagogue, Qā'it Bāy dispatched the governor of Gaza, Amir Yashbak al-ʿAlay, to apprehend several of the distinguished Jerusalemites who were responsible for this public act of insubordination. Al-ʿAlay arrived in Jerusalem and duly arrested the signatories of the protocol overturning the said decree, whereupon he transferred them to Cairo. Once in Cairo, they appeared before several judicial authorities. The chief judges of Egypt ultimately ruled that the synagogue was to be rebuilt and reopened. Furthermore, the main offenders – Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn al-Anṣārī and Judge Ibn ʿUbayya – were flogged and marched in disgrace through the streets of Cairo. Moreover, barring a reprieve from the sultan, they were prohibited from returning to Jerusalem, and both men were never to set foot in Jerusalem again.

When the dust had cleared, a final and exceedingly modest meeting was held at the Noble Sanctuary's Qubbāt Mūsā. The only attendees were the four chief judges of Jerusalem, who had no choice but to rubberstamp the sultan's direct order. After two long years, the public dispute had ended with a victory for the Jews, while the local Muslim community was left bruised and battered. Mujīr al-Dīn goes so far as to call the hearings a *miḥna*[33] (inquisition) and *fitnā fāḥisha* (a heinous internal dispute).

The "synagogue affair" offers a penetrating look at the way the urban community of Jerusalem handled its public affairs. In addition, it divulges the characteristics and borders of the city's public sphere. As the protracted

[32] Idem, 306.

[33] *Miḥna* harks back to one of the most dramatic sociopolitical conflicts occurring during the early Abbasid caliphate. For an analysis of this freighted term's usage in the public sphere, see N. Hurvitz, "The Mihna (Inquisition) and the Public Sphere," in M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (New York, 2002), 17–29.

case snowballed from a relatively minor local dispute to an all-out confrontation between provincial religious authorities and the regime, the venues in which the proceedings were held also changed. The first meetings were confined to the Jewish neighborhood and failed to attract much high-level attention, if any at all. Since the issue was "merely" of a religious nature, it was handled by local religious authorities. Once the dispute was externalized and brought before the sultan in Cairo, the stature of the venues, participants, and attendees rose considerably. It is also worth noting that all the public places in question, be they central *madrasas*, like the Tankiziyya, or locations on the Ḥaram al-Sharīf's platform, were of a religious nature and enjoyed the patronage of the Mamluk elite. Although this was to be expected, given the religious nature of this debate, the fact that they were public venues under the influence of the state is rather telling. The shape of the urban public sphere was primarily determined by both the state and the Muslim community. Even though the dispute was over their synagogue, the Jews were largely relegated to bystanders or, at best, tolerated participants, so long as they conducted themselves in accordance with their humble position. The status quo between the two communities was epitomized by the fact that the Noble Sanctuary – a site that was officially off limits to Jews – hosted the majority of the proceedings.

As noted, the public sphere was dictated by the sultan and local *ulamā*, both of whom negotiated over its character. Qāītbāy unwaveringly intervened in this case not by dint of any religious authority or knowledge, but on account of what he viewed to be the clergy's meddling in the affairs of state. In other words, the sultan refused to cede control over the public sphere and was bent on upholding his status as protector of the empire's minorities. At first, Qāītbāy arrayed his legal-cum-religious experts against those of Jerusalem. However, even the emperor had to, at least on the surface level, respect the accepted rules of the game, according to which the official legal jurisdiction over this affair was undisputedly in the hands of the local clergy. From both a political and military standpoint, the sultan was more than capable of checking the *ulamā*'s activities in Jerusalem, and, at crucial junctures of this public affair, Qā'itbāy even took advantage of his clout. For example, members of the clergy were arrested, summarily forced to stand before disciplinary tribunals, and even exiled from the city. Nevertheless, in order to end the public dispute once and for all, it was essential for the sultan to obtain the consent (albeit via duress) of the local religious authorities, who were forced to go through the legal motions of affirming the royal edict. This, then, demonstrates that the

articulation of religious dogma clearly fell under the purview of the *ulamā*, thereby rendering them key players in the public sphere.

For over two years, Jerusalem's *ulamā* stood their ground against the powerful apparatuses of the regime by organizing the masses, defending the public interest, and regulating the actions of both individuals and groups. In so doing, they proved their mettle in that sphere of urban life that is situated between the "official" and "personal" realms. Even though the public space was heavily influenced and monitored by the state, venues were found for conducting a debate that enabled various stakeholders to participate. As the "synagogue affair" heated up, the proceedings were transferred to venues that narrowed the urban community's autonomy and changed the nature of the legal struggle. Sessions in which the *ulamā* retained a certain degree of independence were held in open public spaces, not least the platform of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Conversely, when the sultan was dead set on calling the shots, the sessions took place in less neutral venues, such as the governor's residence, al-Tankiziyya, and Qubat Mūsā. Put differently, at those stages in which the *ulamā* managed to dictate the shape of the public sphere, the proceedings were held in spaces where they held the upper hand.[34] However, the nature of the venues shifted dramatically when they served as mere cogs in the centralized Mamluk regime.

THE OIL AFFAIR OF JERUSALEM

At the beginning of Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 890/April 1485, Amir Qanṣūh al-Sayfī, the representative of Amir Akbirdī, *dawadār al-kabir*[35] arrived in Jerusalem to carry out a decree commanding all the city's inhabitants (Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike) to purchase olive oil from the Nablus Mountains at an exaggerated price of fifteen gold dinars per qintār.[36] The probable motive behind this order was to exact revenge on behalf of the governor of Jerusalem, Amir Duqmāq, who had been humiliated a year earlier by an investigation of his public conduct that was initiated at the behest of the city's populace. Given the public's response,

[34] In some of the hearings, Ibn ʿUbayya describes the sultan's envoys as timid. He even refers to the governor as a ridiculous figure who the people of Jerusalem had no respect for. See Ibn ʿUabayya, *Wafa' al-ʿUhud*, 12. That said, even if the urban community did enjoy some leverage, the final outcome was dictated by the state.

[35] A possible translation of this position is state secretary.

[36] This unit of weight is the equivalent of 100 raṭls. The precise measurement differs across the region; whereas in Damascus it is around 185 kg, in Aleppo it is about 222 kg. See Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 24–26.

it is safe to assume that this was yet another example of "forced selling," which Mamluk officials engaged in from time to time.[37]

Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, Qanṣūh al-Sayfī set up shop in the governor's house. The local residents were duly summoned to the compound and fixed with a quota of oil, which they had to buy at the steep price. Those who were unable to come up with the money were subjected to the wrath of Mamluk soldiers: they were severely beaten, their homes were pillaged, and their property was confiscated. There were even incidents in which wives were held in prison as collateral until their husbands complied with the edict. This heavy-handed campaign persisted for about a month, until approximately 20,000 golden dinars were exacted and delivered to Amir Akbirdī. The affair came to end when the *dawadār* removed Duqmāq from his position as both governor and supervisor of the two noble sanctuaries. In Mujīr al-Dīn's view, this was divine retribution for Duqmāq's iniquities. In ousting his colleague, Aqbirdī was probably trying to soothe the Jerusalem population's temper by reassuring them that the "perpetrator" would no longer trouble them.

This incident, which Mujīr al-Dīn dubbed an "unparalleled revolting inquisition" (*miḥna fāḥisha*), was indeed exceptional for its violence. To make matters worse, no negotiations were carried out between the urban populace and the regime. Instead of trying to reach some sort of compromise, the Mamluk agents brutally extracted the funds from hapless residents. As Zukin notes, the public institutions at which the events took place were adverse to either a public debate or an appeal.[38] Unlike the synagogue crisis, this affair began at the governor's residence, where the people of Jerusalem were forced to register and pay the tax. From there, it moved on to three main locations in which the regime punished those who failed to comply with the edict: the markets where men were beaten; homes where soldiers infringed on the privacy of families and went so far as to arrest women; and, finally, the city prison. Put differently, the state chose venues that were far from conducive to public dialogue. The local population had no recourse, save for fleeing the city. However, the most glaring sign that the public sphere had been neutralized was the complete silence of the *ulamā* throughout the entire ordeal. Unlike the similar crisis in Tripoli, there is no evidence that a *madrasa* or any other religious institution sought to protect the general public or stand up to the regime's complete disregard for the accepted codes of conduct.

[37] Mujīr al-Dīn discusses this affair in *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, vol. 2, 356–372.
[38] Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, 10–12.

SANCTITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE: THE CONFLICT OVER MOUNT ZION

Mujīr al-Dīn reports that "the Christians of Dayr Ṣahyūn" (The Franciscan order at Mount Zion) constructed a new church near their existing monastery on Mount Zion in Ṣafar 894/January 1489.[39] Although he refrains from uttering their exact name, he is referring to the prominent Franciscan Order, which received custody over the site as early as 691/1291.[40] In all likelihood, Mujīr al-Dīn is speaking of a small vaulted hall near the reputed Tomb of David.[41] The building appears to have been expropriated by the local Muslim authorities a few months later, for there is an extant sultanic decree ordering the authorities in Jerusalem to investigate an official complaint that was lodged by the Franciscans. According to the document, the site served as a Christian burial ground before being converted into a mosque. A hearing was subsequently called at the governor's residence, but the presiding officers – the four chief judges – failed to arrive at any conclusive results.

A year would pass before a new edict for a new enforced fundraiser arrived in the city, this time from Amir Azbak, the commander in chief (*atabek*) of the royal armies, who was encamped near Ramla as part of a military operation against the Ottomans. A special meeting was held at al-Madrasa al-Tankiziyya. Among the participants were the chief judges, as well as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Abī Sharīf al-Kamālī, Shaykh al-Islam Najm al-Dīn b. Jamāʿa, and Amir Duqmāq, in his capacity as both viceroy (*Nā'ib al-Saltana*) and supervisor of the two noble sanctuaries. In the protocol that was sent to Azbak, the council reaffirmed the actions against the Franciscans. However, Shaykh al-Kamālī was apparently still troubled

[39] My survey of the dispute over Mount Zion draws heavily on Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl* 2, 349–360; also see Little, "Communal Strife," 87–97. However, the Mujīr's account does not cover the Jewish perspective. The most extensive discussion on the Jewish claims to these sites and the Jewish community's possible involvement in this convoluted affair is provided by Y. Prawer, "The Franciscan Monastery on Mount Zion and the Jews of Jerusalem during the Fifteenth Century," *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* XIV 1–4 (1948–1949): 15–24 [Hebrew]. Also see H. Z. Hirschberg, "The Tombs of David and Solomon in Islamic Tradition," in *Eretz Israel* 3 (M. D. Cassuto Book) (Jerusalem, 1954), 213–220 [Hebrew].

[40] F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chronicles, Visitors, Pilgrims and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton, 1985), 422.

[41] This site is adjacent to the Cenaculum, the Room of the Last Supper. For an in-depth account of these events, see Little, "Communal Strife," 87–94, which draws heavily on Mujīr al-Dīn's narrative.

by the Christian's rights to Mount Zion because he sent a petition on the matter to the sultan. The latter responded by sending a personal representative, Amir Azbak al-Khāṣṣakī, to investigate three unrelated matters that headlined the Jerusalem public discourse at the time: the alleged improprieties of Amir Duqmāq, following a litany of complaints about his public conduct; a planned survey of al-Aqṣā Mosque in advance of its renovation; and the Franciscans' activity on Mount Zion. Once again, the ensuing events underscore the *ulamā*'s considerable role in the public sphere.

The Duqmāq trial commenced in Hebron, where witnesses were called to testify against him. On Friday 1 Rajab 895/May 21, 1490, Azbak led a large and pompous entourage into Jerusalem, which included the "subject" of the ongoing investigation (Duqmāq). Upon reaching the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, the inquiry was resumed next to the *miḥrab* of al-Aqṣā Mosque, before relocating to al-Ahsrafiyya Madrasa on the western edge of the precinct.

A day later, another meeting was held in Jerusalem that was about to shake things up. Azbak, Duqmāq, and a large contingent of notables and commoners gathered at the newly erected dome on Mount Zion. Following a hearing in which the Franciscans were given an opportunity to counter claims regarding the building's date of construction, the judges ordered the Christians to tear it down. Moreover, they ruled that the Tomb of David would remain in Muslim hands and that Christians could no longer perform rituals there. As the participants headed back to al-Ashrafiyya to continue the interrogation of the viceroy, a rumor spread through the city that none other than Sultan Qā'it Bāy was on his way to town. While some Jerusalemites were about to rush out of the city in order to meet him in Ramla, where he had supposedly stopped en route, others sought to preempt any government intervention in the conflict over Mount Zion. Shaykh al-Islam al-Kamālī ordered the immediate destruction of the Franciscan dome. With this objective in mind, the shaykh proceeded to the site at noon, along with scores of Muslims from all walks of life; by dusk, the entire edifice had been razed to the ground. However, upon completing the task, word arrived that the sultan had never so much as left his palace in Cairo. Consequently, an epistle was immediately sent to Qā'it Bāy informing him of the chain of events that led to and justified both the demolition of the Christian building and the expropriation of the tomb.

With this stage of the Mount Zion controversy behind them, the Jerusalem public was free to conclude the investigation of the viceroy. After twenty-six days of hearings at al-Ashrafiyya Madrasa, Azbak found Duqmāq guilty of grave public misconduct. However, the latter

was ultimately reinstalled into office thanks to the efforts of his supporters in Cairo. What is more, the religious authorities that had testified against him were summoned to Cairo to defend their statements. Only those who had the wherewithal to give substantial bribes were allowed to return to Jerusalem and resume their jobs. Following a temporary recess in the Mount Zion saga, a new order arrived from Qā'it Bāy during Ramaḍān 896/August 1491 instructing Shaykh al-Kamālī to level the entire compound to the ground. The shaykh, along with a bevy of notables and other members of the Muslim community, eagerly complied with the sultan's wishes.

The primacy of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf within the public sphere was conspicuous throughout these events, as different sectors of Jerusalem's Muslim community met at the precinct to hold a public dialogue and negotiations with the representatives of state. Moreover, the central role of religious law and its accepted interpreters in the public sphere, the *ulamā*, were illustrated time and again. Conversely, the limits of the public sphere were also glaringly exposed during the proceedings because the ouster of the unpopular viceroy was easily reversed by the powers that be in Cairo.

PUBLIC SPHERE, PUBLIC SPACE, AND THE LIMITS OF URBAN AUTONOMY IN THE MAMLUK CITY

Over the years, the historical city of the pre-modern Middle East has frequently been portrayed as bereft of local autonomy due to the passivity of the urban populace and the lack of effective institutions.[42] The pertinent question is not whether these assessments are correct, but in comparison to what other societies were they drawn? Although a comparison between the Mamluk city and its Roman, Greek, or Chinese counterparts far exceeds the scope of this work, I would like to touch on the ongoing debate concerning the public sphere in modern European cities. This discussion is apparently as controversial as the one on historical cities. Richard Sennett, inter alia, contends that civic participation in the urban public sphere has diminished in inverse proportion to the rise of capitalism, to the point at which it is an "empty space, a space of abstract freedom but no enduring human connection."[43] In his study of Los Angeles, Mike Davis

[42] Most notably Stern, "Constitution," 49–50.

[43] R. Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York, 1994), 375.

has found that the public has little sway over the processes that ultimately shape the cityscape.[44] As evidenced by the Mamluk elite's decisive morphological contribution to Jerusalem, Tripoli, and Safad, private capital is the key determinant of a city's shape and form. That said, in her study on "public culture," Zukin persuasively demonstrates the viability of modern cities and their vibrant public sphere. In her estimation, the development of physical spaces that enable strangers to meet, exchange ideas, and influence each other's lives is crucial to and indicative of the existence of a meaningful public sphere.[45] The relevancy of this debate to the present study is obvious. The quantification of autonomy, the urban sense of place, and other public features of cities vary according to the benchmark used or the subjective perceptions of the beholder. For example, there are substantial disagreements between scholars over defining the most accessible urban spaces. With this in mind, I would like to explore the nature of the public sphere and public spaces on the basis of the Mamluk-era crises just discussed.

Habermas was the first to refer to the public sphere as a normative ideal of popular, participatory political action. Although his focus was on modern European societies, scholars have increasingly applied this concept to other parts of the world and have posited that more factors than previously believed have a substantial impact on the nature of public space. With respect to the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*, it appears as if religious codes played a crucial role in dictating social norms and thus sociopolitical conduct within the public sphere. More often than not, this process was orchestrated by the *ulamā* in their capacity as religious experts and the accepted interpreters of laws that govern everyday life. By virtue of their various social functions, the clergy bolstered the status of *shariʿa* as the symbol of social convention in the public sphere.[46] However, the *ulamā* were obviously not the only factor behind this development. As Berkey suggests, the Mamluks also "participated intensively in processes of constructing and reconstructing Islam."[47] Translated into the daily life of

[44] M. Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London, 1990).
[45] Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*.
[46] D. Talmon-Heller, "Religion in the Public Sphere: Rulers, Scholars, and Commoners in Syria under Zangid and Ayyubid Rule (1150–1260)," in M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (New York, 2002), 59.
[47] J. P. Berkey, "The Mamlūks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt," in T. Philipp and U. Haarman (eds.), *The Mamlūks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1998), 173.

cities, these activities influenced and dictated the behavior of the public sphere, as well as its physical shape and dimensions.

In sum, the Mamluks and *ulamā* dominated the public sphere in tandem. A case in point is the numerous Mamluk-established institutions that were run by and designated for the educated strata. The various manifestations of what I previously referred to as the demonstration of religious piety on the part of the ruling elite (e.g., the founding of endowments) necessitated and utilized the unique social position of the *ulamā*. Relations between the clergy and the powers that be have attracted a great deal of research attention. Needless to say, the *ulamā*'s distinguished social standing in Mamluk *al-Shām* made them the logical candidates for the job of mediators between the regime and the masses.[48] Conversely, the institutionalization of education – a process that was already well under way by the time the Mamluks came to power – forced the *ulamā* to conform to the state's wishes. In the final analysis, though, the synagogue affair and the conflict over Mount Zion show that the clergy retained much of their resilience and autonomy in public affairs. Likewise, the oil affair in Tripoli attests to the importance of religious norms in the public sphere. The taxation agreement that was hammered out between the governor and the local traders was naturally posted in a religious institution. In so doing, the two parties symbolically recognized the prominent status of the *madrasa* in the public sphere.

Habermas deemed the ability of groups to exert their political will by occasionally confronting the state to be a hallmark of the public sphere.[49] During the public crises in Jerusalem, various groups sought to participate in and dictate the shape of this realm. The more inclusive debates took place in the vicinity of the central mosque and in respected *madrasas*. Conversely, in those instances when the state was less open to compromise or outside input, the nature and location of the discourse was completely different. For instance, during the oil affair, the state acted as a coercive power that ultimately did as it pleased. Furthermore, not a peep was heard from the *ulamā* throughout the whole ordeal, and there is no indication that an institution of learning hosted any of the relevant events. In contrast, the state was much more accommodating during the tax crisis in Tripoli. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the negotiations took place at the

[48] I am well-acquainted with the ongoing debate over the precise nature of these relationships. There appears to be a common denominator between those who view the relationship as a collaboration, mediation, and, as recently suggested, a symbiosis; see, Lev, "Symbiotic Relations."

[49] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 51–56.

Dār al-ʿAdl. As we have seen, the spatiality of the events, or the public space, is informed by and informs the public sphere.

In general, the nature of the public sphere in Mamluk cities was dictated by both the *ulamā*, who had relative autonomy over legal issues, and the state through its numerous agents and institutions. The role of Islam, namely the observance and interpretation of the *sharīʿa*, is self-evident. Once again, both the clergy and regime shaped the Islamic identity of the Mamluk state. The importance of religious practices in the public sphere may be deduced from the fact that when the sultan sought to impose his will on local *ulamā*, he only used his overwhelming political power as a last resort. During the two years of brinkmanship between Cairo and Jerusalem over the fate of the synagogue, for example, the sultan confronted the local *qāḍīs'* unfavorable decisions by positioning his "experts" against them. For the most part, though, the state respected the *ʿulamā*'s autonomy on matters of religious jurisprudence and norm setting. In addition, the sultanate only imposed restrictions on the public sphere when it felt that there was no other alternative for protecting its interests. Needless to say, the *ʿulamā*' were no match for the Mamluks' political, economic, and military prowess. In addition, they were unable to defend the public during times of chaos or when members of the Mamluk elite chose to completely flout the accepted norms (*sharīʿa*). However, the research on physical spaces – "the places that are physically there, as geographical and symbolic centers, as points of assembly where strangers mingle"[50] – shows that the state ascribed a great deal of importance to these channels of communication with the public.

All told, urban space is the product of a synergy among capital investment, cultural meanings, and symbolization. In the specific case of Mamluk Syria, public areas were shaped by the state's interests, on the one hand, and by a highly particular code of social identity, on the other. While the *ulamā* assumed a dominant role in formulating this code, the level of autonomy varied widely according to the circumstances. Likewise, there was a continuous negotiating process between the regime and its subjects over the nature of the public sphere.

[50] Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, 45.

Conclusion

At the very outset of this book, I postulated that, to understand the historical cities of the Near East, one needs to study the annals of the cities, rather than histories that took place therein. With this objective in mind, I suggested that researchers should focus on the cultural context of the urban sphere – an approach that necessitates a theoretical awareness of the dynamic yet elusive dimension of culture as a force with practical consequences. However, this method also has a major limitation; as a theoretical concept, culture is simply too big of an abstraction to work with. Following in the footsteps of Mitchell (1995) and others, I have indeed argued that culture cannot be reified or summed up succinctly. As long as scholars keep looking for an ontological definition to this complex term, we will be hard pressed to formulate accurate accounts of historical cities. Alternatively, I devised a two-stage approach to assaying cultural enterprise: to begin with, I examined how ideals, creed, economic struggles, and other aspects of social life are conceptualized as culture. Second, I discerned the manner in which these concepts were shaped and translated into forms that ultimately influenced the city. In essence, the present study sought to strike a balance between this critical understanding of culture and an attempt to fathom Syrian cities during the Mamluk era via the medium of the urban landscape or built environment, which constitutes the principal text and context of any researcher's efforts to shed light on cities and urban societies. Drawing on Norberg-Schulz's seminal work, this study consists of three levels of analysis: the tangible city, the socially constructed city, and the conceptualized city. In my estimation, these layers are the dyes and threads that comprise the intricate tapestry of the historical city. That said, as we have seen, this neatly compartmentalized,

abstract breakdown of the city is artificial, and the boundaries between these categories are exceedingly nebulous.

My exploration of the tangible parts of the city started with a field survey of Safad, Tripoli, and Jerusalem, as well as with a review of the extant literature on their vernacular architecture. On the basis of my findings, I then established a methodology and criteria for deciphering the architectural language of historical cities. These steps led to the discovery of a well-defined and uniform building style that was adopted throughout the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*. In other words, notwithstanding the existence of local developments and stylistic variations, these urban landscapes indeed shared a vernacular architectural language. This common building tradition cannot be exclusively attributed to religious demands or cultural constraints because inhabitants with different social, religious, and cultural backgrounds used the same construction techniques, materials, and architectural styles.

My in-depth survey of the vernacular architecture has enhanced our understanding of Mamluk Syria's urban residential units – both houses and neighborhoods alike. The argument can be made that the residential unit is one of the most elementary manifestations of any culture, for it is both the medium and outcome of various cultural processes. The domicile is indeed an indispensable component of the city paradigm. In addition to providing the necessary infrastructure for human dwelling, the home is also a canvas on which residents express themselves as both individuals and members of a specific cultural group.

As demonstrated, the urban societies of *al-Shām* featured an array of house types and plans. There were various categories of private domiciles, from extremely luxurious homes to several options for mass housing. Whereas economic means were obviously a key factor in the resident's choice of a neighborhood and abode, other variables came into play as well. In certain places, expansive, opulent homes were located next to much more modest and affordable units. This implies that sociocultural predilections, like proximity to one's *qaraba* (roughly kith and kin), frequently outweighed other considerations.[1]

The significance of cultural and social preferences was also manifested in a general inclination toward an inside-out approach to house plans. More specifically, individual builders availed themselves of a wide range of methods to ensure maximum separation between the private and public

[1] The literal definition of *qaraba* is closeness, but it can also be interpreted as kinship. See Eickelman, "Islamic City," 283; and Chapter 4.

domains. This certainly testifies to the importance that urban dwellers placed on privacy, but the prevalence of this construction style should not be ascribed exclusively to religious norms. The desire for privacy informed many and manifold traditional societies. In addition to the premium put on gender segregation and other modesty-related needs, house plans were heavily influenced by, among other things, climate, technology, construction materials, and, not least, personal taste.

This same logic applies to one of the more commonplace housing types in the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām* – the central courtyard. My textual and morphological surveys clearly attest to the abundance of this plan, which was available in many shapes and sizes across the region. Although quite a few scholars link the profusion of the central courtyard to Islamic norms, the following arguments cast doubt on this hypothesis: first and foremost, the advent of the central courtyard predates that of Islamic civilization by a few thousand years. In addition, a substantial portion of residences lacked this feature, and there were courtyard houses without a central private court. Alternatively, there were also numerous, decidedly functional reasons that stood behind the plan's popularity, such as the need for open space in which to cook and wash. Last but not least, Muslim societies possess traits that have nothing to do with *Sharīʿ* law.

The ongoing attempts to draw a direct corollary between Islamic imperative and urban architecture also inform the literature on residential neighborhoods. In all likelihood, the neighborhood has been a fixture on the urban landscape since the dawn of the city. More than anything else, it fulfils mankind's enduring need for a sense of place and belonging. This urge "to feel at home" is indeed a common human trait that transcends social, religious, or cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, the Muslim neighborhood has often been interpreted as a direct outcome of a predominately Islamic perception of the city.[2] In the book's introductory remarks, I argued in favor of a more general approach to the historical city of the Middle East. Instead of merely viewing it as the tangible product of a specifically religious ideal of urbanism, the so-called Islamic city should be seen as an urban entity that informs many cultures. Accordingly, my disquisition on the Mamluk city draws heavily from Mumford's argument theory that the neighborhood is practically a "fact of nature."[3] In other words, it is an "organic" factor that inheres all urban societies past and

[2] A classic example of this approach is Sauvaget's description of neighborhoods in Damascus; see Sauvaget, "Damas," 452.

[3] Mumford, "The Neighbourhood and the Neighbourhood Unit."

present, regardless of race or creed. The present study also found the Mamluk neighborhood to be a socially oriented framework that covers a certain expanse and not the other way around. Put differently, the neighborhood is primarily defined by the sociocultural needs and ties of its inhabitants. As a result, its spatial borders and physical characteristics are quite flexible.

One problem encountered by scholars of pre-modern urban neighborhoods is the confusion between etymology and nomenclature in the source material. More specifically, the names and terms for neighborhoods that surface in literary descriptions and, on occasion, even in legal documents tend to fall under the heading of the era's local nomenclature rather than reflect its administrative or official terminology. In addition, it is difficult to establish the precise municipal or administrative function of the "typical" residential neighborhood in the pre-modern Middle East. Therefore, any attempt to characterize an urban neighborhood must focus on the social realm, not its spatial configuration.

As we move toward a more abstract conception of the city, the role of culture on the urban landscape becomes much more complicated. The function of the *waqf* (endowment or charitable trust) as an urban prop exemplifies the intricacies involved. This study broached the topic of endowments within the framework of a discussion on socially constructed space. Few would deny that charitable trusts are a social and spatial consequence of Islamic norms, for this institution surfaces in Muslim societies during completely different ages and/or in distant parts of the globe. The Syrian Mamluk city had quite a few *awqaf* of its own, none of which could be severed from its founders' cultural, social, or religious worldview. Furthermore, my analysis demonstrates that this institution was a key factor in numerous facets of daily urban life, such as education, welfare, religion, commerce, and employment. In contrast to earlier scholars who averred that the oriental/Islamic city was void of public institutions (e.g., Stern and Makdisi), I regard endowments to be a dynamic social-cultural mechanism that undergirded a wide array of infrastructures and communal enterprises in the Mamluk cities of *al-Shām*. At the very least, the debate over the existence of public institutions in the Middle Eastern city is skewed. The theory as to the underinstitutionalized "Islamic city" is predicated on cultural (mis)perceptions and (mis)representations, or even biases, stemming from a flawed comparison between the subject at hand and an overly sanguine picture of the traditional European city. Although comparative analyses are undoubtedly valuable research tools, I fail to see the merits of a study that finds one side of the equation to be

inferior simply because it possesses a different set of cultural tools and codes than the other. Not only is this methodology inherently ethnocentric, but it utterly ignores the uniqueness of the Muslim charitable trust.

Endowments provided the Mamluk urban populace with an assortment of vital public compounds, institutions, and services. Moreover, they helped the sultanate and the entire ruling elite form bonds with their subjects (a relationship that, incidentally, stands in stark contradistinction to alienating despotic approaches to governance). In sum, *awqaf* were one of the most crucial sociopolitical mechanisms in the urban arena, sustaining the city and influencing its nature. That said, given the blurred and constantly shifting border between the public and private spheres in patrimonial states like the Mamluk Empire, it is seldom easy to discern the rulers' urban policies or gauge their contributions to the city's landscape. To some extent, the private motives of each trust's founder weaken the hypothesis that endowments were a significant means for advancing a centralized urban policy. However, my comprehensive charts of endowment activity in Jerusalem and Tripoli over the course of the Mamluk period clearly demonstrate that, at the very least, this institution was used to disseminate the Mamluks urban vision. What is more, charitable trusts must be viewed as part of the Mamluk authorities' strategy for attaining one of its most pressing needs – the legitimacy of the local populace.

The Mamluks' conduct in the urban sphere was largely shaped by their need for legitimacy and desire to bolster their authority. Drawing on Weber's seminal work on authority and legitimacy and Sjoeberg's more nuanced theory on the administration of historical cities, I have examined the semiotics of Mamluk patronage in cities of *al-Shām*. In my estimation, the Mamluks were preoccupied with improving their public reputation among the local population. The primary reason for their concern was the fact that the ruling establishment was comprised entirely of a foreign Turkish elite that superimposed itself on a predominantly Arab population. With this objective in mind, the Mamluks availed themselves of various "props," such as the urban citadel, Friday mosques, and *madrasas*, from what Swidler dubs the "cultural toolkit" of values, ideals, religious constraints, and aesthetics that they shared with their subjects, in an effort to publicly display their authority and piety.[4] Moreover, the founding of these endowed institutions created jobs for the local *ulamā*, which improved the regime's relations with this powerful stratum of local society. Notwithstanding the cultural traditions shared by inhabitants throughout

[4] Swidler, "Culture in Action."

the region, it is essential to keep in mind the uniqueness and, at times, critical importance of local qualities – be they personal, historical, or geographical – that were also part and parcel of the cultural landscape of the Syrian Mamluk city or, for that matter, any other society.

The role of culture in scripting and deciphering cities was elaborated in the fourth part of this study – the Conceptualized City. Drawing on the Bourdieuan concept of habitus, I have accentuated the role that culture plays in understanding or envisioning a city. This term also helped elucidate the substantial discrepancies between accounts of the same landscape by various "image makers" or "storytellers" past and present. Notwithstanding the emphasis on intangibles, my highly discursive method for describing cities, especially the advancement of a reflective understanding of the city, is a far cry from an "everything goes" approach. Throughout the pages of this book, I have often explored intangible realities as meticulously and accurately as possible. Whenever available, I have exploited all possible sources in order to overcome inherent lacuna or different understandings of the same urban scene. Furthermore, I have no intention of suggesting that the city is beyond comprehension due to its complexity or a particular "visitor's" inherent cultural (dis)position. At the end of the day, there is indeed a tangible place known as the city! However, to arrive at a close simulation of the multidimensional and multifaceted historical city, the observer must be cognizant of the many, occasionally conflicting, narratives of the very same landscape.

MAMLUKS, THE SYRIAN CITY, AND URBANISM

The presence of the Mamluks, both as individuals and members of a hegemonic elite, in the cities of *al-Shām* cannot be exaggerated. Although their impact on urban infrastructures and landmarks is self-evident, there are question marks as to whether the Mamluks engaged in urban planning in the true sense of the word. These doubts notwithstanding, over the next few pages, I will summarize the mainstays of the Mamluk urban outlook as evinced throughout the lands of Syria.

The use of endowments in the built environment. As mentioned earlier, charitable trusts undergirded a host of urban activities and infrastructures in the Mamluk city. It is worth reiterating that the establishment of a *waqf* is, first and foremost, a personal and voluntary action subject to the priorities, proclivities, and whims of the patron. That said, most of the endowments in the cities of *al-Shām* adhered to a general set of principles and were indeed guided by the regime's policies and goals.

Development of new urban areas. A recurring feature of Mamluk construction in Syria was to develop new urban centers or areas within existing cities. For example, in Jerusalem, the Mamluks erected new institutions in a previously empty area of the city, near the walls of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Soon after, a handful of new neighborhoods took root in the space around these compounds. Conversely, settlements like Safad, Tripoli, and especially Gaza, which could hardly be considered cities prior to the Mamluks' arrival, were transformed into the capitals of newly founded provinces.

It was only during the reign of Baybars that Safad even merited the title of "city" for the first time in its rather unpresumptuous history. With respect to Gaza, Ibn Tagrī Birdī (d. 1470) offers an account of the relentless development that was spearheaded by al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn:

> And thus regarding the city of Gaza, he [al-Maik al-Nāṣir] is the one who turned it into a city and created it according to this plan. . . . [H]eretofore, it was like any other of the villages in *al-Shām*. . . . [B]efore then, it was only an agricultural estate that was part of the estates of al-Ramla.[5]

The case of Tripoli is a bit more complicated. A city by that name indeed existed prior to the Mamluk conquest of 1291. However, as soon as the area was captured, the sultan relocated the entire city and built it anew. For all intents and purposes, Tripoli is a Mamluk urban innovation.

Urban defences. As a rule of thumb, the Mamluks' favored means for protecting its cities – from both internal and external threats – was the citadel, as these sort of facilities were either shored up or introduced to urban landscapes throughout the region. In addition to its various symbolic and sociocultural meanings, the citadel was principally a defensive structure. In this respect, then, it should be viewed as a spatial expression of the Mamluks' general strategy of relying on a mobile and offensive-minded army. By housing soldiers in a particular town, the citadel served as a springboard for quickly mobilizing and maneuvering the troops. As a result of this policy, city walls were, by and large, neglected and rarely built from scratch or renovated. Ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī (d. 1468) left us an inventory of urban fortifications that were in existence toward the end of the Mamluk period.[6] Out of the fifty-six cities he mentioned, ten apparently had both a wall and a citadel, twenty-four only had a citadel, and

[5] Ibn Tagrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vol. 9, 193.
[6] Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubdat*, 41–49.

eight walled towns either lacked a citadel or the edifice was in ruins. Finally, there were fourteen cities for which al-Ẓāhirī failed to provide any useful data.

An intriguing observation of the Mamluk defence strategy was made by none other than Felix Fabri, a Dominican monk, during a visit to Jerusalem in the late fifteenth century:

> Along the circuit of the walls and battlements there were once towers, whose ruins we can trace; but the Saracens have torn them down and have built other towers within the city, near the mosques, for use in their rituals;[7] for they do not trouble themselves about the fortifications of cities, but keep a very close eye on the entrance to the land.[8]

Due to the Mamluks' general neglect of fortified walls, the city limits were more flexible. For example, new neighborhoods or other facilities could easily be constructed outside the walls. Reiter's mid-fifteenth-century map of Jerusalem accurately depicts the expansion of the town's boundaries.[9] Even if the wall marked the city's border in the mental map of its inhabitants, this had no practical spatial meaning on their daily lives.

Architectural style. During the Mamluk era, a common architectural language came into being, the results of which stand out to this day. The ostentatious style for monumental or luxurious buildings that was eventually in vogue throughout the sultanate originally took form in Cairo.[10] In other words, the public spaces of Syria's cities were saturated with compounds and institutions that were fashioned in the "Mamluk style."

The Mamluk officials' impact on the urban landscape was overwhelming because the vast majority of the principal institutions were commissioned by members of this elite. Put differently, the Mamluks were effectively responsible for creating, building, and maintaining the high architectural order of the urban expanse. Although the overall face of the city was, by and large, the cumulative work of its inhabitants, the ruling establishment set the tone and erected the monumental buildings. As noted, there were certainly stylistic differences between the region's cities but a common syntax of urban architecture emerged on account of the Mamluks' cumulative building output. For instance, the same batch of

[7] Fabri is apparently referring to minarets.
[8] Fabri, 9, 224–225.
[9] See Chapter 7, n. 85.
[10] For more on the urban features that took root in Cairo during the Mamluk period, see D. Bherens-Abouseif, "The Mamluk City," in S. K. Jayyusi, R. Holod, A. Petruccioli, and A. Reymond, Eds., *The City in the Islamic World*, vol. I (Leiden, 2008), 295–316.

urban institutions could be found across the entire region, even if they were established at different stages of the particular town's development or in different parts of each city. The sheer number of public compounds fashioned in accordance with the Mamluk style was so vast that it engendered a homogeneous imageability and look throughout the provinces of *al-Shām*.

THE CITY AS A CULTURAL PROCESS

The objective of this study has been to construct and then put to work a theoretical framework for assaying the pre-modern cities of Syria during the Mamluk era. My findings demonstrate that these cities should be viewed, above all, as socio-cultural-political processes, rather than inert localities. This vantage point not only enables us to understand the city for what it was and is, but to accept the dynamic and inevitable mutability that inheres to the urban form – be it in Europe, the Indian subcontinent, or the Islamic Middle East. This work also sheds light on the significance of a particular researcher's positionality in all that concerns his or her views on the region's historical urban milieu under Islamic rule. For too long, the study of historical urbanism in the Middle East has been beholden to a Eurocentric narrative. This approach is informed by a negative and, at times, derogative view of the area's cities. What is more, it has led some scholars to the misguided conclusion that these entities were not genuine urban expanses. Put bluntly, the time has come for pre-modern Near Eastern urban settlements to be universally acknowledged as full-fledged cities.

Like any urban entity, the Mamluk city of *al-Shām* was in a constant state of flux. Its landscape was always being contested, reinterpreted, and reconceptualized by both inhabitants and observers alike. As a human construct, the city is invariably a social and cultural phenomenon. Although the city obviously has a physical reality, it is also experienced and conceptualized as a social framework for everyday life. Drawing on these ideas, urban researchers have examined multiple perspectives and meanings for cities, including the values and ideals that rulers and residents invested in the built urban environment, for the purpose of constructing tangible and ideological landscapes.[11] These conceptual understandings

[11] The literature on these topics is abundant. I suggest that readers consult the following authorities: Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*; Chevallier, *L'Espace social de la ville arabe*; Park, "The City"; L. Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1938), 1–24. Two more recent works of note are Agnew, Mercer, and Sopher, *The City in Cultural Context*; and Lefebvre, *The Social Production of Space*.

enable us to view the city as a "work in progress." In turn, this allows scholars to move beyond the merely "physical appearance" to a critical reading of the urban sphere as an ever-changing outcome of sociopolitical processes. Once researchers come to the realization of how little is actually known about the culture of the Middle East, the study of urbanism in the region will be less vulnerable to superficial, meta-historical overgeneralizations – like the notion of the Islamic City.

THE MAMLUK CITY OF *AL-SHĀM* VIS-À-VIS THE ISLAMIC CITY MODEL

At the outset of this study, we noted that the research on Mamluk cities in Syria has been prejudiced by the existing model of the Islamic city. Although this paradigm has indeed been battered and bruised in recent years, it is hardly on the brink of extinction, particularly in the field of Middle Eastern urban studies.[12] I have repeatedly shown how certain features of the Mamluk city were misrepresented and misinterpreted in the literature primarily due to poorly conceived comparisons with nonexistent European counterparts or false Islamic paradigms. This shortcoming was quite glaring in works on domiciles, neighborhoods, the public sphere, and, all the more so, the socially constructed city. Needless to say, I am not the first to express grave concerns about these interpretations and representations of the premodern city of the Middle East, as these issues have already been the object of a comprehensive debate. In brief, the model's detractors claim that the tendency to emphasize the impact of Islam on the development of a certain urban morphology or urbanism is oversimplistic and ignores more universal sociocultural behaviors and predispositions. Although the Islamic faith surely contributed to the morphological and social alignment of *al-Shām*'s cities during the Mamluk era, many other factors – the majority of which are decidedly profane – figured heavily as well.

Against this backdrop, I contend that the historical Middle Eastern city should be examined within the framework of the more general discourse on urbanism throughout the world. Furthermore, the city should be viewed as a dynamic cultural phenomenon. By dint of this cultural

[12] For the sake of brevity, I will only mention the leading critic of this model, Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City." A comprehensive literary survey can be found in G. A. Neglia, "Some Historiographical Notes on the Islamic City with Particular Reference to the Visual Representations of the Built City," in S. K, Jayyusi, R. Holod, A. Petruccioli, and A. Reymond, Eds., *The City in the Islamic World*, vol. I (Leiden, 2008), 3–46.

prism, I have explained how and why the city is imagined, understood, articulated, and narrated in myriad ways. To unveil these aspects of the urban landscape is to humanize it; to render it an intensive, living, and constantly changing entity, rather than a series of permanent physical or social features. At best, the latter perspective offers a cursory glance of what the city is or was. Despite more than three decades of reflective, nuanced, and highly critical research on the historical city of the Middle East, use of the flawed "Islamic city" model persists. Whereas urban and, of course, social historians have rid their respective fields of this approach,[13] the tendency to define and, more importantly, reinstate this paradigm is still alive among architects, urban planners, and even urban geographers,[14] so that the debate is far from over. For example, in *The Image of the City*, Lynch suggests that the city should be explored as "an object which is perceived."[15] It is precisely these sort of approaches that demand constant scrutiny.

Frenkel offers a unique perspective on this topic in his discussion on "the Islamic space of cities."[16] Drawing on court records, he argues that cities in late medieval Egypt and Syria did not necessarily have a well-defined religious character; yet the very functioning of Islamic courts, Frenkel argues, helped shape the landscape and produce an Islamic space. In his account of fifteenth-century Cairo's ambitious urban renovation project, he suggests that "the destruction of the old buildings and the creation of a new urban landscape required legitimization by the religious establishment."[17] This view is indeed commensurate with Abu-Lughod's argument that gender segregation was a key religious factor in the development of urban spaces throughout the Muslim world.[18]

Frenkel's notion of an Islamic space appreciably differs from the more traditional "Islamic city," which portrays both city and faith as static and

[13] For example, see Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance*.

[14] A case in point is C. Mechkat, "The Islamic City and the Western City: A Comparative Analysis," in A. Y. Saqqaf, Ed., *The Middle Eastern City. Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World* (New York, 1987), 25–47. Mechkat's constructions of the historical "Islamic city" were recently cited, almost verbatim, in the editorial of an urban sociology journal, where they were deemed to be no less than Holy Writ. H. Silver, "Divided Cities in the Middle East," *City and Community* 9/4 (2010): 345–357.

[15] Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 2.

[16] Y. Frenkel, "Is There an Islamic Space? Urban and Social Issues, as Reflected in the *Qadi* (Cadi) Courts of Egypt and Syria (13th–16th Centuries)," in Y. Lev (ed.), *Towns and Material Culture in the Medieval Middle East* (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2002), 103–104.

[17] Ibid., 115–116.

[18] Abu Lughod, "The Islamic City," 170–172.

reified institutions. This conceptualization has sharpened our perspective of the city's physical development but does not fundamentally alter the terms of the debate. Moreover, adherents of Frenkel's view are liable to consider the city in question a conglomeration of physical products that have been manufactured exclusively by Islam, thereby overstating the relation between religion and physical space.

The construction of models is a fundamental tool of intellectual endeavor. Paradigms and theories allow the scholar to demarcate a well-defined area of study and shape a research agenda. Moreover, it allows us to communicate our knowledge and partake in colleagues' contributions to the field. As suggested throughout this book, the problem is not with the need to generalize or the very pursuit of a theory, but with associating Middle Eastern landscapes with the highly problematic model of the Islamic city. Far be it from me to underestimate the importance of Islam in the urban history of this region. Indeed, this very book has offered more than a few examples of Islamic cultural influences on the urban landscape of Mamluk *al-Shām*. That said, embracing the notion of the Islamic city is akin to championing an idealized version of Islam that distorts its role as both a religion and a civilization. Terminating the quest for an Islamic brand of urbanism does not imply that religion had a trifling effect on the urban history of the Near East and beyond. Instead, it suggests a more balanced approach to the city as a vibrant expanse that embraces new cultural developments. By grasping culture as an idea, rather than an entity, the study of cities may well avoid the obsession with clear-cut, definitive, and overly rigorous definitions of what constitutes a city in the Muslim world. Furthermore, scholars would be less likely to view the city as a petrified expanse. Conversely, this sort of approach paves the way for a dynamic framework with which to examine historical cities and their societies – one that enables researchers to appreciate the vibrancy of these ever-changing physical and social landscapes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Endowment Buildings in Mamluk Jerusalem

The list is based, unless complemented and noted, on Mujīr al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī al-ʿUlaymī, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl bī-Ta'rīkh al-Quds wa-l-Khalīl*. Amman, 1973. 2 vols.

Legend:

* = Location exceeds map boundaries

† = Location was not specified due to insufficient data

The Compound/Building Religious Compounds	Founder/Title[1]	Date of Endowment
1. Khānqāh al-Ṣalāḥiyya	Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb/Sultan	1189
2. *Zāwiya al-Jarāḥiyya	Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Jarāḥī/Amir	before 1192
3. Masjid	Abū al-Ḥasān al-ʿAlī/Amir	1193
4. Zāwiya al-Darkā'a	Shihāb al-Dīn Ghāzī/Amir	1216
5. *Qubbat al-Qaymariyya	?	circa 1250
6. Turbat Berke Khān	Ḥusām al-Dīn Berke Khān/Amir	1280[2]
7. Mosque[3]	Al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn/ Sultan	1287
8. *Zāwiya al-Kubaliyya	ʿAlā' al-Dīn Aydughdī b. ʿAbd Allah al-Kubakī/Amir	before 1289ḍ
9. Turba al-Awḥadiyya	Najm al-Dīn Yūsuf b. al-Malik al-Nāṣir Dā'ūd/official	1279
10. Zāwiya al-Maghāriba	ʿUmar b. ʿAbdallāh al-Magīribī	1303
11. Turba al-Jālikiyya	Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jālik al-Ṣāliḥī/Amir	1307
12. Turba al-Saʿdiyya	Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd/Amir	1311

[1] Unless otherwise noted, when a title is not specified, the founder should be inferred as a private person.

[2] Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 110.

[3] *CIA*, 2/2, 202–203.

13. Khānqāh al-Fakhariyya	Fakhr al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad b. Faḍlallāh	1332
14. Zāwiya Abū Madyan	Shuʿayb Abū Madyan al-Magharibī	Early fourteenth century
15. Zāwiya al-Mihamaziyya	Kamāl al-Dīm al-Mihmazī	1345
16. Zāwiya al-Arzak[4]	Ibrāhīm al-Arzak	circa 1349
17. Zāwiya al-Muḥammadiyya	Muḥammad b. Zakariya al-Nāṣirī	1350
18. *Zāwiya al-Qalandariyya	Ibrāhīm al-Qalandarī	circa 1350
19. Turba[5] Turkān Khātūn	Turkān Khātūn b. Tuqtāy b. Saljuqtāy al-Azbakī	1352
20. Zāwiya al-Tawāshiyya	Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Jalāl al-Dīn b. Fakhar al-Dīn Muḥammad	1352
21. Turba al-Kīlāniyya	Jmāl al-Dīn Pahlawān b. Amīr Shams al-Dīn Kardash	1352
22. *Zāwiya al-Adhamiyya	Manjak al-Yūsufī	circa 1358
23. Zāwiya al-Shaykhūniyya	Sayf al-Dīn Katishā b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad	1359
24. Zāwiya al-Bisṭāmiyya	ʿAbd Allah b. Khalīl b. ʿAlī al-Asad al-Bisṭāmī	before 1368
25. Zāwiya al-Lu'lu'iyya	Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' Ghazī	1373
26. Turba al-Ṭashtamuriyya	Sayf al-Dīn Ṭashtamur al-ʿAlāy/ Amir	1382
27. Zāwiya al-Qiramī	Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Gīlī/Amir	before 1386
28. Zāwiya al-Yūnisīyya	?	circa 1388
29. Turba Sitt Ṭunshuq[6]	Ṭunshuq b. ʿAbdallāh al-Muẓaffariyya	circa 1388
30. Zāwiya al-Wafā'iyya	Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Wafā' Muḥammad	circa 1380
31. *Zāwiya al-Ḥamrā	?	?
32. Zāwiya al-Hunūd	?	?
33. *Zāwiya al-Murjīʿa[7]	?	1439
34. Turba	Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Khuskadam	1461

[4] Al-ʿAsalī, *Maʿahid*, 351.
[5] *CIA* 2/2, 273–276.
[6] See, *CIA* 307–312 for a discussion of her plausible identity.
[7] Al-ʿAsalī, *Maʿahid*, 368.

35. Majid ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭab	?	?
36. Zāwiya Yaʿqūb al-ʿAjamī	?	?

Education Compounds

40. Madrasa al-Khātūniyya	Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb/Sultan	1191
41. Madrasa al-Ṣalāḥiyya	Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb/Sultan	1192
42. Madrasa al-Maymūniyya	Faris al-Dīn Abū Saʿīd Maymūn al-Qaṣrī/Amir	1192[8]
43. Madrasa al-Afḍaliyya	al-Malīk al-Afḍal Nūr al-Din Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn	1196
44. Madrasa al-Naḥawiyya	al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿIsā/Amir	1207
45. Madrasa al-Naṣiriyya	al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿIsā/Amir	1213
46. Madrasa al-Badariyya	Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abū al-Qāsim al-Hakārī	1213
47. Madrasa al-Muʿaẓẓamiyya	al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿIsā/Amir	1217
48. Dar al-Ḥadīth	Sharf al-Dīn ʿIsā b. Badr al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim al-Hakārī/Amir	1267
49. Madrasa al-Dawādāriyya	ʿIlm al-Dīn Abū Mūsā Sanjar b. ʿAbd Allah al-Dawādār al-Ṣalāḥī/Amir	1295
50. Madrasa al-Salāmiyya	Majid al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍā' Ismāʿīl Al-Salāmī	circa 1300
51. Madrasa al-Wajīhiyya	Wajīh al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Asʿad b. al-Najā' al-Ḥanbalī	before 1301
52. Madrasa al-Jāwliyya	ʿIlm al-Dīn Samjar al-Jāwlī	1315
53. Madrasa al-al-Karīmiyya	Karīm al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muʿalim Hibbat Allah b. Miknās	1318[9]
54. Madrasa al-Tankiziyya	Sayf al-Dīn Abū Saʿīd Tankiz/Amir	1328
55. Madrasa al-Amīmnīyya[10]	Amīn al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh/clergy	1329
56. Madrasa al-Malikiyya	Malik al-Jūkandār al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī/Amir	1339
57. Madrasa al-Fārisiyya	Fārisī al-Bakī b. Amir Kutlū Malik b. ʿAbdallāh/Amir	1354[11]

[8] See Powers, "Revenues," 166, n. 6 for this dating.
[9] The date is established according to the deed of endowment as presented by Mujīr al-Dīn, al-Uns 2, 39–40.
[10] Al-Qlqashandī, *Subḥ al-Aʿashā* 4, 293; there, this place is mentioned as a *zāwiya*.
[11] Date according to the deed of endowment.

58. Madrasa al-Khātūniyya	Ughul Khātūn b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sayf al-Dīn al-Kāzaniyya	1357
59. Madrasa al-Tashtamuriyya	Tashtamur al-ʿAlāʾ al-Sayfī al-Malik	1357
60. Madrasa al-Ḥasaniyya	Shahīn al-Ḥasanī al-Tawāshī/clergy	before 1361
61. Dār al-Quran al-Salāmiyya	Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Abū al-Qasim al-Salāmī	1360
62. Madrasa al-Muḥaddathiyya	ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd ʿAzīz al-ʿAjamī al-Ardabīlī	1360
63. Madrasa al-Ṭāziya	Safy al-Dīn Ṭāz/Amir	1361
64. Madrasa al-Arghūniyya	Arghūn al-Kāmilī/Amir	1365
65. Madrasa al-Bawārdiyya	Safrī Khātūn b. Sharf al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Bawārdī	1366
66. Madrasa al-Majakiyya	Manjak al-Yūsufī/Amir	1368
67. Madrasa al-Asʿardiyya	Majd al-Dīn ʿAbdalghānī b. Sayf al-Dīn b. Abū Bakr Yūsuf al-Asʿardī	1368
68. Madrasa al-Luʾluʾiyya	Badr al-Dīn Luʾluʾ Ghāzī/Amir	1373
69. Madrasa al-Ḥanbaliyya	Sayf al-Dīn Baydamur al-Khawārizmī/Amir	1375
70 Madrasa al-Baladiyya[12]	Mankalī Bajā al-Aḥmadī/Amir	before 1380
71. Madrasa al-Ṣubaybiyya[13]	ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn b. Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad/Amir	circa 1397
72. Madrasa al-Tūlūniyya	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. al-Nāṣirī	before 1397
73. Madrasa al-Kāmiliyya	Kāmil from Tripoli	before 1413
74. Madrasa al-Bāsitiyya	Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Bāsit b. Khalīl al-Dimashqī	1430
75. Madrasa al-Ghādiriyya	Miṣr Khātūn/Amir's wife	1432
76. Madrasa al-Hasaniyya	Ḥusām al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Hasan b. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Kashkīlī	1433
77. Madrasa al-ʿUthmāniyya	Isfahān Shaʾ Khātūn	1436
78. Madrasa al-Jawhariyya	Jawhar al-Qunqubāy/clergy	1440
79. Madrasa al-Muzhiriyya	Abū Bakr b. Muzhir al-Anṣarī Al-Dimashqī/clergy	1451
80. Madrasa al-Ashrafiyya	Al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāītbāy/Sultan	1482

[12] Mūjīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns* 2, 35. But see, *CIA* 2/2, 291 where it is called Madrasa Mankalī Bajā.

[13] For a possible identification of the builder based on an heraldic emblem see *CIA* 2/2 229–230.

81. Madrasa al-Jahārkasiyya[14]	Sayf al-Dīn Jahārkas b. ʿAbdallāh/ Amir	before 1486

Commercial Compounds and Hosteleries

100. *Khān al-Ẓāhir	Al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars Al-Bundukdārī/Sultan	1263
101. Ribāṭ ʿAlā' al-Dīn	ʿAlā' al-Dīn Aydughdī al-Baṣīr	1267
102. Khān ʿAlā' al-Dīn[15]	ʿAlā' al-Dīn Aydughdī al-Baṣīr	1267
103. Ribāṭ al-Manṣūrī	Al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn/Sultan	1282
104. Ribāṭ al-Kurt al-Manṣūrī	Sayf al-Dīn Kurt al-Manṣūrī/Amir	1294
105. Shops	Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Ḥanbalī	1314
106. *Khān al-Jāwlī[16]	ʿIlm al-Dīn Sanjar al-Jāwlī	1315?
107. Sūq al-Qaṭṭānīn	Sayf al-Dīn Takiz/Amir	1328
108. Khān Tankiz	Sayf al-Dīn Takiz/Amir	1328
109. Ribāṭ al-Nisā'	Sayf al-Dīn Takiz/Amir	1328
110. Ribāṭ al-Mārdīnī	Wives of al-Ṣalāḥ Ghāzī (governor of Mārdīn)	1361
111. Dār al-Wakāla	Al-Malik al-Ẓāhīr Barqūq/Sultan	1386
112. †Khān al-Qaṭṭānīn	Al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad/Sultan	1461
113. †Khān	Fakhr al-Dīn al-Nusayba	1474
114. Ribāṭ al-Zamanī	Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Zamīn	1476
115. †Khān al-Fakhm	?	?
116. Khān al-Ghādriyya	Miṣr Khātūn/Amir's wife	1432
117. Three main markets	?	?

Miscellaneous, Ḥammas *and* Sabīls

120. Ḥaram al-Sharīf[17]		
121. Ḥārat al-Maghāriba	Al-Malik al-Afḍal b. Salāḥ al-Dīn	circa 1190
122. †Dār	Kalk Khātūn b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdāllah	?
123. Ḥammām Bāb al-Asbāṭ[18]	Salāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb/Sultan	1189
124. Ḥammām ʿAlā' al-Dīn	ʿAlā' al-Dīn Aydughdī al-Baṣīr	1267
125. Ḥammām al-Shifā'	Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz/Amir	circa 1328
126. Ḥammām al-ʿAyn	Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz/Amir	circa 1328

[14] Mūjīr al-Dīn does not supply us with the construction date. However, see Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm* 11, 383.
[15] This compound is mentioned in the Ottoman Defter see, Powers, "Revenues," 172.
[16] Al-ʿAsalī, *Min Athārīnā*, 90.
[17] See Richards' survey in Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 77–84.
[18] Al-ʿAsalī, *Min Athārīnā*, 201–205.

127. Dār al-Sitt Ṭunshuq	Ṭunshuq b. ʿAbdāllah al-Muẓẓafariyya	circa 1388
128. †Ḥammām Dā'ūd	?	?
129. Ḥammām al-Batrik	?	?
130. Ḥammām al-ʿAmmūd	?	?
131. al-Bimāristān al-Ṣalāḥī	Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb/Sultan	1187

Appendix B: Endowment Buildings in Mamluk Tripoli

The list is based on the following:

P. Collart et al., *Lebanon, Suggestions for the Plan of Tripoli and for the Surroundings of the Baalbek Acropolis*. Report of the UNESCO Mission of 1953 Museum and Monuments 6. Paris, 1954.

ʿA-ʿA Salem, *Ṭarāblus al-Shām fī al- Ta'rīkh al-Islāmī*. Alexandria, 1967.

H. Salam-Leibich, H. *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli*. Cambridge, Mass., 1983.

M. M. Sobernheim, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscirptionum Arabicurum* 25. Le Caire, 1909.

Legend:

* = Location exceeds map boundaries

† = Location was not specified due to insufficient data

The Compound/Building Religious Compounds	Founder/Title[19]	Date of Endowment
1. The Great Mosque	Al-Ashraf Khalīl/Sultan	1294
2. Masjid ʿAbd al-Waḥid	ʿAbd al-Waḥid al-Miknāsī	1305/1306
3. Masjid-Madrasa al-Burṭāsī	ʿIsā b. ʿUmar al-Burṭāsī	1324
4. Jāmi' Ṭaynāl	Ṭaynāl/Amir	1336
5. Jāmi' al-ʿAṭṭār[20]	Badr al-Dīn b. al-ʿAṭṭār	1350
6. Jāmi' Arghūn Shāh	Arghūn Shāh/Amir	circa 1394
7. Jāmi' al-Uwaysī	Muḥī al-Dīn al-Uwaysī	1460
8. †Jāmi' Ṭaḥḥān	?	Fifteenth century
9. †Jāmi' al-Tawba	?	Fifteenth century
10. Jāmi' al-Ṣabāghīn	locals from Tripoli	Before 1477
11. *Khānqāh	?	circa 1467
12. * Zawiya al-Mawlawiyya	?	Fifteenth century

[19] Unless otherwise noted, if a title not specified, the founder should be inferred as a private person.

[20] Sobernheim defines this compound as a *madrasa*, see p. 124.

Education Compounds

20. Madrasa al-Zurayqiyya[21]	ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak/Amir	1298
21. Madrasa Khayriyyat Ḥasan	Khayriyya Ḥasan/Mamluk's wife	1309
22. Madrasa al-Qarṭāwiyya	Qarṭāy/Amir	1316
23. Madrasa al-Nūriyya	Nūr al-Din	1333?
24. Madrasa al-Shamsiyya	Shams al-Din al-Mawlawī/Amir	1349
25. Madrasa al-Naṣiriyya	Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn/ Sultan	1354
26. Madrasa al-Saqraqiyya	Sayf al-Dīn Aqṭurq/Amir	1359
27. Madrasa al-ʿAjmiyya	Muḥammad al-Sukkar	1365
28. Madrasa al-Khātūniyya	Arghūn Khatūn/Amir's wife	1373
29. Madrasa al-Ẓāhiriyya	Sayf al-Dīn Taghrī Birmish/Amir	1396
30. Madrasa al-Ṭuwāshiyya	Sayf al-Dīn al-Ṭuwāshī/Amir	1471
31. †Madrasa al-Qādiriyya	?	?
32. †Madrasa Shaykh al-Waṭār	?	before 1458
33. Madrasa al-Rifāʿiyya	?	before 1465
34. Madrasa al-ʿUmariyya	Asandamur al-ʿAnbarī/Amir	1466
35. Mashhad	?	?

Commercial Compounds

40. Khān al-Manzil	Asandamur al-Kurjī/Amir	1309
41. Khān al-Khayyāṭīn	Badr al-Dīn/Amir[22]	1341
42. Khān al-Miṣriyyīn	?	Fourteenth century

Ḥammas *and* Sabīls

50. Ḥammam ʿIzz al-Dīn	ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak/Amir	1294
51. Ḥammam al-Ḥajīb	Asandamur al-Kurjī/Amir	1301
52. Ḥammam al-Nūrī	?	1333
53. Sabīl al-Tīnā	Muḥammad b. Mubarakshāh	1413

[21] The *madrasa* also included the founder's mausoleum.

[22] A certain Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Turkmanī was the Naʿib in Tripoli that year. He is mentioned by al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* 2, pp. 383–385.

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Note: Abbreviations are found above on p. . Authors of primary sources have been arranged alphabetically (in English) by the name by which they are best known by modern scholars; the definite article al- before names has been disregarded in this arrangement.

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